



PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Painted at Rome in 1819 by Miss Amelia Curran

POEMS

BY
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY
ALICE MEYNELL

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The poetry of Shelley is so peculiarly his own that a mere fragment of a line, even though unknown to the hearer, might be recognized as his. The ear recognizes it, as well as the understanding, for the modulation is all his; so, in many respects, is the diction; and the very word "Shelley", because it is his name, takes the character of his poetry. That character is exceedingly serious as well as wild; it has the motion of an Ariel without Ariel's light heart; it is nothing if not responsible and sad; and yet what a flight is his—what a flitting! No one can define the Shelley quality by any word; but we may take a word to represent it, and call it magical. His is the wild spirit, the "winged heart" of which Tasso speaks. Of his altogether irresistible power, which he not often calls upon, the student cannot take a better example than the "Ode to the West Wind". Of his pranks of wit and humour I have given no examples. As banter of Wordsworth, I think John

Hamilton Reynolds' parody is far better than Shelley's. A volume of Shelley is principally a volume of pure poetic imagery.

The poetry of imagery may seem, to the minds of young readers, the poetry of all poetry—the greatest, or the sole. It is not so, however, for there is a region of poetry on the yonder side of imagery which is transcendently great; it is the further simplicity, and the company of poets—albeit immortal—who never reach it are not the greatest. They have stopped finally upon the beauty of imagery, whereas the master poets, having paused there also, go beyond and touch realities with a miraculous touch. For if exquisite secondary poetry is magical, supreme poetry is miraculous—it is more greatly and more nobly wonderful. Imagery is in the outer courts of the temple of poetry. Criticism has defined Shelley a poet of the secondary order; he is, accordingly, the poet of imagery. And there is imagery and imagery—that which is imaginative and constructive, and as it were incorporate, and that which is mere similitude. That lovely poem, "The Skylark", has a string of similitudes, entertained for a moment, and

let go. On the other hand, the phrase "I fall upon the thorns of life", in the Ode to the West Wind, is an incorporate image.

Percy Bysshe Shelley was born in 1792 at Field Place, Sussex, his father's hereditary house. His brief life ended by the wrecking of his boat in the Gulf of Spezzia, in 1822. He was a rebel against his father whom he contemned and cursed, it is not easy to understand precisely for what cause. He was unhappy at school, and expelled from the University of Oxford for printing his views on atheism. Upon the matter of his marriages the reader need not dwell. The names in Shelley's love-poems are not of literary importance except when they rhyme. All his loves seem to have been illusory and brief. But perhaps a knowledge of one incident contributes to our judgment of such a poem as that which Shelley addressed to the Lord Chancellor as the expression of a malediction upon him for the official withdrawal of Shelley's two children from the father's care—"I curse thee by a parent's outraged love", &c. One of these children had been, with its unhappy mother, forsaken by this father a few months before its birth.

Shelley's biographers are urgent to deprecate any harsh judgment of the facts which his own writings have forced upon our knowledge. By all means let Shelley's memory, as that of a divine poet, be spared. But the writers of half a score of Lives of Shelley are not poets, and not exempt from the commands of humanity and honour. They should have a warmer word of pity for her who in her helpless youth was left adrift, and died by her own act.

The present selection avoids Shelley's contentious poems, but otherwise has no rule except the choice of the loveliest of his lovely writings. The pieces are not arranged chronologically, but follow each other singly or in groups as their character of subject and form suggests.

ALICE MEYNELL.

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The Cloud

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting
flowers,

From the seas and the streams;

I bear light shade for the leaves when
laid

In their noonday dreams.

From my wings are shaken the dews that
waken

The sweet buds every one,

When rocked to rest on their mother's
breast,

As she dances about the sun.

I wield the flail of the lashing hail,

And whiten the green plains under,

And then again I dissolve it in rain,

And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,

And their great pines groan aghast;

And all the night 't is my pillow white,

While I sleep in the arms of the blast.

THE CLOUD

Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers,
Lightning my pilot sits,
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,
It struggles and howls at fits;
Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
This pilot is guiding me,
Lured by the love of the genii that move
In the depths of the purple sea;
Over the rills, and the crags, and the
hills,
Over the lakes and the plains,
Wherever he dream, under mountain or
stream,
The Spirit he loves remains;
And I all the while bask in heaven's
blue smile,
Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor
eyes,
And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
When the morning star shines dead,
As on the jag of a mountain crag,
Which an earthquake rocks and
swings,
An eagle alit one moment may sit
In the light of its golden wings.
And when sunset may breathe, from the
lit sea beneath,

THE CLOUD

Its ardours of rest and of love,
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine airy
nest,
As still as a brooding dove.

That orbèd maiden with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,
May have broken the woof of my tent's
thin roof,

The stars peep behind her and peer;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built
tent,

Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me
on high,
Are each paved with the moon and
these.

I bind the sun's throne with a burning
zone,
And the moon's with a girdle of pearl;

THE CLOUD

The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel
and swim,

When the whirlwinds my banner
unfurl.

From cape to cape, with a bridge-like
shape,

Over a torrent sea,

Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,

The mountains its columns be.

The triumphal arch through which I
march

With hurricane, fire, and snow,

When the powers of the air are chained
to my chair,

Is the million-coloured bow;

The sphere-fire above its soft colours
wove,

While the moist earth was laughing
below.

I am the daughter of earth and water,

And the nursling of the sky;

I pass through the pores of the ocean and
shores;

I change, but I cannot die.

For after the rain when with never a
stain,

The pavilion of heaven is bare,

And the winds and sunbeams with their
convex gleams,

THE CLOUD

Build up the blue dome of air,
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost
from the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again.

To a Skylark

Hail to thee, blithe spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest;
Like a cloud of fire
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring
ever singest.

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
Thou dost float and run,
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just
begun.

The pale purple éven
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of heaven
In the broad daylight,
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill
delight,

TO A SKYLARK

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear,
Until we hardly see, we feel that it is
there.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and
heaven is overflowed.

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see,
As from thy presence showers a rain of
melody

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it
heeded not:

TO A SKYLARK

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace-tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which over-
flows her bower:

Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its aërial hue
Among the flowers and grass, which
screen it from the view:

Like a rose embowered
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflowered,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet these
heavy-winged thieves.

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music
doth surpass.

TO A SKYLARK

Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine:
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so
divine

Chorus Hymeneal,
Or triumphal chaunt,
Matched with thine would be all
But an empty vaunt,
A thing wherein we feel there is some
hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? what
ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be:
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee:
Thou lovest; but ne'er knew love's sad
satiety.

TO A SKYLARK

Waking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a
crystal stream?

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not;
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of
saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn
Hate, and pride, and fear;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should
come near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of
the ground!

TO A SKYLARK

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow,
The world should listen then, as I am
listening now.

A Summer Evening Churchyard

LECHLADE,
GLOUCESTERSHIRE

The wind has swept from the wide atmos-
phere
Each vapour that obscured the sunset's
ray;
And pallid evening twines its beaming hair
In duskier braids around the languid eyes
of day:
Silence and twilight, unbeloved of men,
Creep hand in hand from yon obscurest
glen.

They breathe their spells towards the de-
parting day,
Encompassing the earth, air, stars, and
sea;
Light, sound, and motion own the potent
sway,
Responding to the charm with its own
mystery.
The winds are still, or the dry church-
tower grass
Knows not their gentle motions as they
pass.

A SUMMER EVENING

Thou too, aërial Pile! whose pinnacles
Point from one shrine like pyramids of fire,
Obeyest in silence their sweet solemn spells,
Clothing in hues of heaven thy dim and
distant spire,
Around whose lessening and invisible height
Gather among the stars the clouds of night.

The dead are sleeping in their sepulchres,
And mouldering as they sleep; a thrilling
sound,
Half sense, half thought, among the dark-
ness stirs,
Breathed from their wormy beds all living
things around,
And mingling with the still night and
mute sky
Its awful hush is felt inaudibly.

Thus solemnized and softened, death is mild
And terrorless as this serenest night:
Here could I hope, like some enquiring
child
Sporting on graves, that death did hide
from human sight
Sweet secrets, or beside its breathless sleep
That loveliest dreams perpetual watch did
keep.

Sonnet: England
in 1819

An old, mad, blind, despised, and dying
king,—
Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who
flow
Through public scorn,—mud from a
muddy spring,—
Rulers who neither see, nor feel, nor
know,
But leech-like to their fainting country
cling,
Till they drop, blind in blood, without a
blow,—
A people starved and stabbed in the
untilled field,—
An army, which liberticide and prey
Makes as a two-edged sword to all who
wield
Golden and sanguine laws which tempt
and slay;
Religion Christless, Godless—a book sealed;
A Senate,—Time's worst statute unre-
pealed,—
Are graves, from which a glorious Phan-
tom may
Burst, to illumine our tempestuous day.

Ode to Heaven.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS

First Spirit

Palace-roof of cloudless nights!
Paradise of golden lights!

Deep, immeasurable, vast,
Which art now, and which wert then
Of the present and the past,
Of the eternal where and when,
Presence-chamber, temple, home,
Ever-canopying dome,
Of acts and ages yet to come!

Glorious shapes have life in thee,
Earth, and all earth's company;
Living globes which ever throng
Thy deep chasms and wildernesses;
And green worlds that glide along;
And swift stars with flashing tresses;
And icy moons most cold and bright,
And mighty suns beyond the night
Atoms of intensest light.

ODE TO HEAVEN

Even thy name is as a god,
Heaven! for thou art the abode
Of that power which is the glass
Wherein man his nature sees.
Generations as they pass
Worship thee with bended knees.
Their unremaining gods and they
Like a river roll away:
Thou remainest such alway.

Second Spirit

Thou art but the mind's first chamber,
Round which its young fancies clamber,
Like weak insects in a cave,
Lighted up by stalactites;
But the portal of the grave,
Where a world of new delights
Will make thy best glories seem
But a dim and noonday gleam
From the shadow of a dream!

Third Spirit

Peace! the abyss is wreathed with scorn
At your presumption, atom-born!
What is heaven? and what are ye
Who its brief expanse inherit?
What are suns and spheres which flee

ODE TO HEAVEN

With the instinct of that spirit
Of which ye are but a part?
Drops which Nature's mighty heart
Drives through thinnest veins! Depart!

What is heaven? a globe of dew,
Filling in the morning new
Some eyed flower whose young leaves
waken

On an unimagined world:
Constellated suns unshaken,
Orbits measureless, are furled
In that frail and fading sphere,
With ten millions gathered there,
To tremble, gleam, and disappear.

Ode to the West Wind

O wild West Wind, thou breath of
Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the
leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter
fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic
red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold
and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and
fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed
in air)
With living hues and odours plain and
hill:

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, Oh hear!

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep
sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves
are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven
and Ocean.

Angels of rain and lightning: there are
spread
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the
head

Of some fierce Mænad, even from the dim
verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height
The locks of the approaching storm.
Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing
night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst:
Oh hear!

Thou who didst waken from his summer
dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline
streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baia's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them!
Thou

For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far
below

The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which
wear

The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with
fear,

And tremble and despoil themselves;
Oh hear!

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and
share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over
heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er
have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore
need.

Oh lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and
bowed

One too like thee: tameless, and swift,
and proud.

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

Will take from both a deep, autumnal
tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, spirit
fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new
birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among man-
kind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O, wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far
behind?

An Exhortation

Chameleons feed on light and air:
Poets' food is love and fame:
If in this wide world of care
Poets could but find the same
With as little toil as they,
Would they ever change their hue
As the light chameleons do,
Suiting it to every ray
Twenty times a day?

Poets are on this cold earth,
As chameleons might be,
Hidden from their early birth
In a cave beneath the sea;
Where light is, chameleons change:
Where love is not, poets do:
Fame is love disguised: if few
Find either, never think it strange
That poets range.

Yet dare not stain with wealth or power
A poet's free and heavenly mind:
If bright chameleons should devour
Any food but beams and wind,

AN EXHORTATION

They would grow as earthly soon
As their brother lizards are.
Children of a sunnier star,
Spirits from beyond the moon,
O refuse the boon!

Lines to an
Indian Air

I arise from dreams of thee
In the first sweet sleep of night,
When the winds are breathing low,
And the stars are burning bright:
I arise from dreams of thee,
And a spirit in my feet
Hath led me—who knows how!
To thy chamber window, Sweet!

The wandering airs they faint
On the dark, the silent stream—
And the Champak odours fail
Like sweet thoughts in a dream;
The nightingale's complaint,
It dies upon her heart;—
As I must on thine,
O belovèd as thou art!

Oh lift me from the grass!
I die! I faint! I fail!
Let thy love in kisses rain
On my lips and eyelids pale.

LINES TO AN INDIAN AIR

My cheek is cold and white, alas!
My heart beats loud and fast;—
Oh! press it to thine own again,
Where it will break at last.

To Sophia
[Miss Stacey]



Thou art fair, and few are fairer
Of the Nymphs of earth or ocean;
They are robes that fit the wearer—
Those soft limbs of thine, whose motion
Ever falls and shifts and glances
As the life within them dances.

Thy deep eyes, a double Planet,
Gaze the wisest into madness
With soft clear fire,—the winds that fan it
Are those thoughts of tender gladness
Which, like Zephyrs on the billow,
Make thy gentle soul their pillow.

If, whatever face thou paintest
In those eyes, grows pale with pleasure,
If the fainting soul is faintest
When it hears thy harp's wild measure,
Wonder not that when thou speakest
Of the weak my heart is weakest.

TO SOPHIA

As dew beneath the wind of morning,
As the sea which Whirlwinds waken,
As the birds at thunder's warning,
As aught mute yet deeply shaken,
As one who feels an unseen spirit
Is my heart when thine is near it.

To William
Shelley

Thy little footsteps on the sands
Of a remote and lonely shore;
The twinkling of thine infant hands,
Where now the worm will feed no more
Thy mingled look of love and glee
When we returned to gaze on thee.—

Love's Philosophy

The Fountains mingle with the River
And the Rivers with the Ocean,
The winds of Heaven mix for ever
With a sweet emotion;
Nothing in the world is single;
All things by a law divine
In one another's being mingle.
Why not I with thine?—

See the mountains kiss high Heaven
And the waves clasp one another;
No sister-flower would be forgiven
If it disdained its brother,
And the sunlight clasps the earth
And the moonbeams kiss the sea:
What are all these kissings worth
If thou kiss not me?

The Sensitive Plant

PART FIRST

A Sensitive Plant in a garden grew,
And the young winds fed it with silver
dew,
And it opened its fan-like leaves to the
light,
And closed them beneath the kisses of
night.

And the Spring arose on the garden fair,
Like the Spirit of Love felt everywhere;
And each flower and herb on Earth's
dark breast
Rose from the dreams of its wintry rest.

But none ever trembled and panted with
bliss
In the garden, the field, or the wilderness,
Like a doe in the noontide with love's
sweet want,
As the companionless Sensitive Plant.

THE SENSITIVE PLANT

The snowdrop, and then the violet,
Arose from the ground with warm rain
 wet,
And their breath was mixed with fresh
 odour, sent
From the turf, like the voice and the
 instrument.

Then the pied wind-flowers and the tulip
 tall,
And narcissi, the fairest among them all,
Who gaze on their eyes in the stream's
 recess,
Till they die of their own dear loveliness;

And the Naiad-like lily of the vale,
Whom youth makes so fair and passion
 so pale,
That the light of its tremulous bells is
 seen
Through their pavilions of tender green;

And the hyacinth purple, and white, and
 blue,
Which flung from its bells a sweet peal
 anew
Of music so delicate, soft, and intense,
It was felt like an odour within the sense;

THE SENSITIVE PLANT

And the rose like a nymph to the bath
 address,
Which unveiled the depth of her glowing
 breast,
Till, fold after fold, to the fainting air
The soul of her beauty and love lay bare:

And the wand-like lily, which lifted up,
As a Mænad, its moonlight-coloured cup,
Till the fiery star, which is its eye,
Gazed through clear dew on the tender
 sky;

And the jessamine faint, and the sweet
 tuberose,
The sweetest flower for scent that blows;
And all rare blossoms from every clime
Grew in that garden in perfect prime.

And on the stream whose inconstant
 bosom
Was pranked under boughs of embowering
 blossom,
With golden and green light, slanting
 through
Their heaven of many a tangled hue,

Broad water-lilies lay tremulously,
And starry river-buds glimmered by,

THE SENSITIVE PLANT

And around them the soft stream did
glide and dance
With a motion of sweet sound and
radiance.

And the sinuous paths of lawn and of
moss,
Which led through the garden along and
across,
Some open at once to the sun and the
breeze,
Some lost among bowers of blossoming
trees,

Were all paved with daisies and delicate
bells
As fair as the fabulous asphodels,
And flowrets which drooping as day
drooped too
Fell into pavilions, white, purple, and
blue,
To roof the glow-worm from the evening
dew.

And from this undefiled Paradise
The flowers (as an infant's awakening
eyes
Smile on its mother, whose singing sweet
Can first lull, and at last must awaken it),

THE SENSITIVE PLANT

When Heaven's blithe winds had unfolded
 them,
As mine-lamps enkindle a hidden gem,
Shone smiling to Heaven, and every one
Shared joy in the light of the gentle sun;

For each one was interpenetrated
With the light and the odour its neighbour
 shed,
Like young lovers whom youth and love
 make dear
Wrapped and filled by their mutual atmo-
 sphere.

But the Sensitive Plant which could give
 small fruit
Of the love which it felt from the leaf to
 the root,
Received more than all, it loved more
 than ever,
Where none wanted but it, could belong
 to the giver;

For the Sensitive Plant has no bright
 flower;
Radiance and odour are not its dower;
It loves, even like Love, its deep heart
 is full,
It desires what it has not, the beautiful!

THE SENSITIVE PLANT

The light winds which from unsustaining
wings

Shed the music of many murmurings;
The beams which dart from many a star
Of the flowers whose hues they bear afar;

The plumed insects swift and free,
Like golden boats on a sunny sea,
Laden with light and odour, which pass
Over the gleam of the living grass;

The unseen clouds of the dew, which lie
Like fire in the flowers till the sun rides
high,

Then wander like spirits among the
spheres,
Each cloud faint with the fragrance it
bears;

The quivering vapours of dim noontide,
Which like a sea o'er the warm earth
glide,

In which every sound, and odour, and
beam,

Move, as reeds in a single stream;

Each and all like ministering angels were
For the Sensitive Plant sweet joy to bear,
Whilst the lagging hours of the day
went by

Like windless clouds o'er a tender sky.

THE SENSITIVE PLANT

And when evening descended from heaven
above,
And the Earth was all rest, and the air
was all love,
And delight, tho' less bright, was far
more deep,
And the day's veil fell from the world of
sleep,

And the beasts, and the birds, and the
insects were drowned
In an ocean of dreams without a sound;
Whose waves never mark, tho' they ever
impress
The light sand which paves it, conscious-
ness;

(Only overhead the sweet nightingale
Ever sang more sweet as the day might
fail,
And snatches of its Elysian chant
Were mixed with the dreams of the
Sensitive Plant.)

The Sensitive Plant was the earliest
Up-gathered into the bosom of rest;
A sweet child weary of its delight,
The feeblest and yet the favourite,
Cradled within the embrace of night.

THE SENSITIVE PLANT

PART SECOND

There was a Power in this sweet place,
An Eve in this Eden; a ruling grace
Which to the flowers, did they waken or
dream,
Was as God is to the starry scheme.

A Lady, the wonder of her kind,
Whose form was upborne by a lovely mind
Which, dilating, had moulded her mien
and motion
Like a sea-flower unfolded beneath the
ocean,

Tended the garden from morn to even:
And the meteors of that sublunar heaven,
Like the lamps of the air when night
walks forth,
Laughed round her footsteps up from the
Earth!

She had no companion of mortal race,
But her tremulous breath and her flushing
face
Told, whilst the morn kissed the sleep
from her eyes
That her dreams were less slumber than
Paradise:

THE SENSITIVE PLANT

As if some bright Spirit for her sweet
sake
Had deserted heaven while the stars were
awake,
As if yet around her he lingering were,
Tho' the veil of daylight concealed him
from her.

Her step seemed to pity the grass it prest;
You might hear, by the heaving of her
breast,
That the coming and going of the wind
Brought pleasure there and left passion
behind.

And wherever her airy footstep trod,
Her trailing hair from the grassy sod
Erased its light vestige, with shadowy
sweep,
Like a sunny storm o'er the dark green
deep.

I doubt not the flowers of that garden
sweet
Rejoiced in the sound of her gentle feet;
I doubt not they felt the spirit that came
From her glowing fingers thro' all their
frame.

THE SENSITIVE PLANT

She sprinkled bright water from the
stream
On those that were faint with the sunny
beam;
And out of the cups of the heavy flowers
She emptied the rain of the thunder
showers.

She lifted their heads with her tender
hands,
And sustained them with rods and osier
bands;
If the flowers had been her own infants
she
Could never have nursed them more
tenderly.

And all killing insects and gnawing
worms,
And things of obscene and unlovely
forms,
She bore in a basket of Indian woof,
Into the rough woods far aloof,

In a basket, of grasses and wild-flowers
full,
The freshest her gentle hands could pull
For the poor banished insects, whose
intent,
Although they did ill, was innocent.

THE SENSITIVE PLANT

But the bee and the beamlike ephemeris
Whose path is the lightning's, and soft
 moths that kiss
The sweet lips of the flowers, and harm
 not, did she
Make her attendant angels be.

And many an antenatal tomb,
Where butterflies dream of the life to
 come,
She left clinging round the smooth and
 dark
Edge of the odorous cedar bark.

This fairest creature from earliest spring
Thus moved through the garden minis-
 tering
All the sweet season of summer tide,
And ere the first leaf looked brown—she
 died!

PART THIRD

Three days the flowers of the garden fair,
Like stars when the moon is awakened,
 were,
Or the waves of Baiæ, ere luminous
She floats up through the smoke of
 Vesuvius.

THE SENSITIVE PLANT

And on the fourth, the Sensitive Plant
Felt the sound of the funeral chaunt,
And the steps of the bearers, heavy and
slow,
And the sobs of the mourners deep and
low;

The weary sound and the heavy breath,
And the silent motions of passing death,
And the smell, cold, oppressive, and dank,
Sent through the pores of the coffin plank;

The dark grass, and the flowers' among
the grass,
Were bright with tears as the crowd did
pass;
From their sighs the wind caught a
mournful tone,
And sate in the pines, and gave groan
for groan.

The garden, once fair, became cold and
foul,
Like the corpse of her who had been its
soul,
Which at first was lovely as if in sleep,
Then slowly changed, till it grew a heap
To make men tremble who never weep.

THE SENSITIVE PLANT

Swift summer into the autumn flowed,
And frost in the mist of the morning
 rode,
Though the noonday sun looked clear and
 bright,
Mocking the spoil of the secret night.

The rose leaves, like flakes of crimson
 snow,
Paved the turf and the moss below.
The lilies were drooping, and white, and
 wan,
Like the head and the skin of a dying
 man.

And Indian plants, of scent and hue
The sweetest that ever were fed on dew,
Leaf by leaf, day after day,
Were massed into the common clay.

And the leaves, brown, yellow, and gray,
 and red,
And white with the whiteness of what is
 dead,
Like troops of ghosts on the dry wind
 past;
Their whistling noise made the birds
 aghast.

THE SENSITIVE PLANT

And the gusty winds waked the wingèd
seeds,
Out of their birthplace of ugly weeds,
Till they clung round many a sweet
flower's stem,
Which rotted into the earth with them.

The water-blooms under the rivulet
Fell from the stalks on which they were
set;
And the eddies drove them here and
there,
As the winds did those of the upper air.

Then the rain came down, and the broken
stalks,
Were bent and tangled across the walks;
And the leafless net-work of parasite
bowers
Massed into ruin; and all sweet flowers.

Between the time of the wind and the
snow,
All loathliest weeds began to grow,
Whose coarse leaves were splashed with
many a speck,
Like the water-snake's belly and the toad's
back.

THE SENSITIVE PLANT

And thistles, and nettles, and darnels
rank,
And the dock, and henbane, and hemlock
dank,
Stretched out its long and hollow shank,
And stifled the air till the dead wind
stank.

And plants, at whose names the verse
feels loath,
Filled the place with a monstrous under-
growth,
Prickly, and pulpous, and blistering, and
blue,
Livid, and starred with a lurid dew.

And agarics, and fungi, with mildew and
mould
Started like mist from the wet ground
cold;
Pale, fleshy, as if the decaying dead
With a spirit of growth had been ani-
mated!

Spawn, weeds, and filth, a leprous scum,
Made the running rivulet thick and dumb,
And at its outlet flags huge as stakes
Dammed it up with roots knotted like
water-snakes.

THE SENSITIVE PLANT

And hour by hour, when the air was still,
The vapours arose which have strength
to kill:

At morn they were seen, at noon they
were felt,

At night they were darkness no star
could melt.

And unctuous meteors from spray to spray
Crept and flitted in broad noonday
Unseen; every branch on which they alit
By a venomous blight was burned and bit.

The Sensitive Plant like one forbid
Wept, and the tears within each lid
Of its folded leaves which together grew
Were changed to a blight of frozen glue.

For the leaves soon fell, and the branches
soon

By the heavy axe of the blast were hewn;
The sap shrank to the root through every
pore

As blood to a heart that will beat no
more.

For Winter came: the wind was his whip:
One choppy finger was on his lip:
He had torn the cataracts from the hills
And they clanked at his girdle like
manacles;

THE SENSITIVE PLANT

His breath was a chain which without
a sound

The earth, and the air, and the water
bound;

He came, fiercely driven, in his chariot-
throne

By the tenfold blasts of the arctic zone.

Then the weeds which were forms of
living death

Fled from the frost to the earth beneath.

Their decay and sudden flight from frost

Was but like the vanishing of a ghost!

And under the roots of the Sensitive Plant

The moles and the dormice died for want:

The birds dropped stiff from the frozen air

And were caught in the branches naked
and bare.

First there came down a thawing rain

And its dull drops froze on the boughs
again,

Then there steamed up a freezing dew

Which to the drops of the thaw-rain
grew;

And a northern whirlwind, wandering
about

Like a wolf that had smelt a dead child
out,

THE SENSITIVE PLANT

Shook the boughs thus laden, and heavy
and stiff,
And snapped them off with his rigid griff.

When winter had gone and spring came
back
The Sensitive Plant was a leafless wreck;
But the mandrakes, and toadstools, and
docks, and darnels,
Rose like the dead from their ruined
charnels.

CONCLUSION

Whether the Sensitive Plant, or that
Which within its boughs like a spirit sat
Ere its outward form had known decay,
Now felt this change, I cannot say.

Whether that lady's gentle mind,
No longer with the form combined
Which scattered love, as stars do light,
Found sadness, where it left delight,

I dare not guess; but in this life
Of error, ignorance, and strife,
Where nothing is, but all things seem,
And we the shadows of the dream,

THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE

To love and wonder; he would linger
long

In lonesome vales, making the wild his
home,

Until the doves and squirrels would
partake

From his innocuous hand his bloodless
food,

Lured by the gentle meaning of his
looks,

And the wild antelope, that starts whene'er
The dry leaf rustles ⁱⁿ the brake, sus-
pend

Her timid steps to gaze upon a form
More graceful than her own.

His wandering step
Obedient to high thoughts, has visited

The awful ruins of the days of old:

Athens, and Tyre, and Balbec, and the
waste

Where stood Jerusalem, the fallen towers

Of Babylon, the eternal pyramids,

Memphis and Thebes, and whatsoe'er of
strange

Sculptured on alabaster obelisk,

Or jasper tomb, or mutilated sphynx,

Dark Æthiopia in her desert hills

Conceals. Among the ruined temples
there,

Stupendous columns, and wild images

ALASTOR: OR

Of more than man, where marble dæmons
watch
The Zodiac's brazen mystery, and dead
men
Hang their mute thoughts on the mute
walls around,
He lingered, poring on memorials
Of the world's youth, through the long
burning day
Gazed on those speechless shapes, nor,
when the moon
Filled the mysterious halls with floating
shades
Suspended he that task, but ever gazed
And gazed, till musing on his vacant
mind
Flashed like strong inspiration, and he
saw
The thrilling secrets of the birth of time.

Meanwhile an Arab maiden brought his
food,
Her daily portion, from her father's tent,
And spread her matting for his couch,
and stole
From duties and repose to tend his
steps:—
Enamoured, yet not daring for deep awe
To speak her love:—and watched his
nightly sleep,

THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE

Sleepless herself, to gaze upon his lips
Parted in slumber, whence the regular
breath
Of innocent dreams arose: then, when red
morn
Made paler the pale moon, to her cold
home
Wildered, and wan, and panting, she
returned.

The Poet wandering on, through Arabia
And Persia, and the wild Carmanian waste,
And o'er the aërial mountains which pour
down
Indus and Oxus from their icy caves,
In joy and exultation held his way;
Till in the vale of Cashmire, far within
Its loneliest dell, where odorous plants
entwine
Beneath the hollow rocks a natural bower,
Beside a sparkling rivulet he stretched
His languid limbs. A vision on his sleep
There came, a dream of hopes that never
yet
Had flushed his cheek. He dreamed a
veiled maid
Sate near him, talking in low solemn
tones.
Her voice was like the voice of his own
soul

ALASTOR: OR

Heard in the calm of thought; its music
long,
Like woven sounds of streams and breezes,
held
His inmost sense suspended in its web
Of many-coloured woof and shifting hues.
Knowledge and truth and virtue were her
theme,
And lofty hopes of divine liberty,
Thoughts the most dear to him, and
poesy,
Herself a poet. Soon the solemn mood
Of her pure mind kindled through all her
frame
A permeating fire: wild numbers then
She raised, with voice stifled in tremulous
sobs
Subdued by its own pathos: her fair
hands
Were bare alone, sweeping from some
strange harp
Strange symphony, and in their branching
veins
The eloquent blood told an ineffable tale.
The beating of her heart was heard to
fill
The pauses of her music, and her breath
Tumultuously accorded with those fits
Of intermitted song. Sudden she rose.
As if her heart impatiently endured

THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE

Its bursting burthen: at the sound he
turned,
And saw by the warm light of their own
life
Her glowing limbs beneath the sinuous
veil
Of woven wind, her outspread arms now
bare,
Her dark locks floating in the breath of
night,
Her beamy bending eyes, her parted
lips
Outstretched, and pale, and quivering
eagerly.
His strong heart sunk and sickened with
excess
Of love. He reared his shuddering limbs
and quelled
His gasping breath, and spread his arms
to meet
Her panting bosom: . . . she drew back
a while,
Then, yielding to the irresistible joy,
With frantic gesture and short breath-
less cry
Folded his frame in her dissolving arms.
Now blackness veiled his dizzy eyes, and
night
Involved and swallowed up the vision;
sleep,

ALASTOR: OR

Like a dark flood suspended in its course,
Rolled back its impulse on his vacant
brain.

Roused by the shock he started from
his trance—
The cold white light of morning, the blue
moon
Low in the west, the clear and garish
hills,
The distinct valley and the vacant woods,
Spread round him where he stood. Whither
have fled
The hues of heaven that canopied his
bower
Of yesternight? The sounds that soothed
his sleep,
The mystery and the majesty of Earth,
The joy, the exultation? His wan eyes
Gaze on the empty scene as vacantly
As ocean's moon looks on the moon in
heaven.
The spirit of sweet human love has sent
A vision to the sleep of him who spurned
Her choicest gifts. He eagerly pursues
Beyond the realms of dream that fleeting
shade;
He overleaps the bounds. Alas! alas!
Were limbs, and breath, and being inter-
twined

THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE

Thus treacherously? Lost, lost, for ever
lost,

In the wide pathless desert of dim sleep,
That beautiful shape! Does the dark gate
of death

Conduct to thy mysterious paradise,
O Sleep? Does the bright arch of rain-
bow clouds,

And pendent mountains seen in the calm
lake,

Lead only to a black and watery depth,
While death's blue vault, with loathliest
vapours hung,

Where every shade which the foul grave
exhales

Hides its dead eye from the detested day,
Conduct, O Sleep, to thy delightful realms?
This doubt with sudden tide flowed on his
heart;

The insatiate hope which it awakened
stung

His brain even like despair.

While daylight held

The sky, the Poet kept mute conference
With his still soul. At night the passion
came,

Like the fierce fiend of a distempered
dream,

And shook him from his rest, and led
him forth

ALASTOR: OR

Into the darkness.—As an eagle, grasped
In folds of the green serpent, feels her
breast

Burn with the poison, and precipitates
Through night and day, tempest, and
calm, and cloud,

Frantic with dizzying anguish, her blind
flight

O'er the wide æry wilderness: thus driven
By the bright shadow of that lovely
dream,

Beneath the cold glare of the desolate
night,

Through tangled swamps and deep pre-
cipitous dells,

Startling with careless step the moonlight
snake,

He fled. Red morning dawned upon his
flight,

Shedding the mockery of its vital hues
Upon his cheek of death. He wandered on
Till vast Aornos seen from Petra's steep
Hung o'er the low horizon like a cloud;
Through Balk, and where the desolated
tombs

Of Parthian kings scatter to every wind
Their wasting dust, wildly he wandered on,
Day after day, a weary waste of hours,
Bearing within his life the brooding care
That ever fed on its decaying flame.

THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE

And now his limbs were lean; his scattered hair

Sered by the autumn of strange suffering
Sung dirges in the wind; his listless hand

Hung like dead bone within its withered skin;

Life, and the lustre that consumed it, shone

As in a furnace burning secretly
From his dark eyes alone. The cottagers,
Who ministered with human charity
His human wants, beheld with wondering awe

Their fleeting visitant. The mountaineer,
Encountering on some dizzy precipice
That spectral form, deemed that the Spirit of wind

With lightning eyes, and eager breath, and feet

Disturbing not the drifted snow, had paused

In its career: the infant would conceal
His troubled visage in his mother's robe
In terror at the glare of those wild eyes,
To remember their strange light in many a dream

Of after-times; but youthful maidens, taught

By nature, would interpret half the woe

ALASTOR: OR

That wasted him, would call him with
false names
Brother, and friend, would press his pallid
hand
At parting, and watch, dim through tears,
the path
Of his departure from their father's door.

At length upon the lone Chorasman
shore
He paused, a wide and melancholy waste
Of putrid marshes. A strong impulse
urged
His steps to the sea-shore. A swan was
there,
Beside a sluggish stream among the
reeds.
It rose as he approached, and with strong
wings
Scaling the upward sky, bent its bright
course
High over the immeasurable main.
His eyes pursued its flight.—“Thou hast
a home,
Beautiful bird; thou voyagest to thine
home,
Where thy sweet mate will twine her
downy neck
With thine, and welcome thy return with
eyes

THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE

Bright in the lustre of their own fond joy.
And what am I that I should linger here,
With voice far sweeter than thy dying
notes,

Spirit more vast than thine, frame more
attuned
To beauty, wasting these surpassing
powers

In the deaf air, to the blind earth, and
heaven

That echoes not my thoughts?" A gloomy
smile

Of desperate hope wrinkled his quivering
lips.

For sleep, he knew, kept most relentlessly
Its precious charge, and silent death
exposed,

Faithless perhaps as sleep, a shadowy
lure,

With doubtful smile mocking its own
strange charms.

Startled by his own thoughts he looked
around.

There was no fair fiend near him, not a
sight

Or sound of awe but in his own deep
mind.

A little shallop floating near the shore

ALASTOR: OR

Caught the impatient wandering of his
gaze.

It had been long abandoned, for its sides
Gaped wide with many a rift, and its
frail joints

Swayed with the undulations of the tide.
A restless impulse urged him to embark
And meet lone Death on the drear ocean's
waste;

For well he knew that mighty Shadow
loves

The slimy caverns of the populous deep.

The day was fair and sunny, sea and
sky

Drank its inspiring radiance, and the
wind

Swept strongly from the shore, blackening
the waves.

Following his eager soul, the wanderer
Leaped in the boat, he spread his cloak
aloft

On the bare mast, and took his lonely
seat,

And felt the boat speed o'er the tranquil
sea

Like a torn cloud before the hurricane.

As one that in a silver vision floats
Obedient to the sweep of odorous winds

THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE

Upon resplendent clouds, so rapidly
Along the dark and ruffled waters fled
The straining boat. — A whirlwind swept
it on,

With fierce gusts and precipitating force,
Through the white ridges of the chafed
sea.

The waves arose. Higher and higher still
Their fierce necks writhed beneath the
tempest's scourge

Like serpents struggling in a vulture's
grasp.

Calm and rejoicing in the fearful war
Of wave ruining on wave, and blast on
blast

Descending, and black flood on whirlpool
driven

With dark obliterating course, he sate:
As if their genii were the ministers
Appointed to conduct him to the light
Of those beloved eyes, the Poet sate
Holding the steady helm. Evening came
on,

The beams of sunset hung their rainbow
hues

High 'mid the shifting domes of sheeted
spray

That canopied his path o'er the waste
deep;

Twilight, ascending slowly from the east,

ALASTOR: OR

Entwined in duskier wreaths her braided
locks
O'er the fair front and radiant eyes of
day;
Night followed, clad with stars. On every
side
More horribly the multitudinous streams
Of ocean's mountainous waste to mutual
war
Rushed in dark tumult thundering, as
to mock
The calm and spangled sky. 'The little
boat
Still fled before the storm; still fled, like
foam
Down the steep cataract of a wintry river;
Now pausing on the edge of the riven
wave;
Now leaving far behind the bursting mass
That fell, convulsing ocean. Safely fled—
As if that frail and wasted human form,
Had been an elemental god.

At midnight
The moon arose: and lo! the ethereal
cliffs
Of Caucasus, whose icy summits shone
Among the stars like sunlight, and around
Whose caverned base the whirlpools and
the waves
Bursting and eddying irresistibly

THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE

Rage and resound for ever.—Who shall
save?—

The boat fled on,—the boiling torrent
drove,—

The crags closed round with black and
jagged arms,

The shattered mountain overhung the sea,
And faster still, beyond all human speed,
Suspended on the sweep of the smooth
wave,

The little boat was driven. A cavern
there

Yawned, and amid its slant and winding
depths

Ingulphed the rushing sea. The boat
fled on

With unrelaxing speed.—“Vision and
Love!”

The Poet cried aloud, “I have beheld
The path of thy departure. Sleep and
death

Shall not divide us long!”

The boat pursued
The windings of the cavern. Daylight
shone

At length upon that gloomy river's flow;
Now, where the fiercest war among the
waves

Is calm, on the unfathomable stream

ALASTOR: OR

The boat moved slowly. Where the mountain, riven,
Exposed those black depths to the azure sky,
Ere yet the flood's enormous volume fell
Even to the base of Caucasus, with sound
That shook the everlasting rocks, the mass
Filled with one whirlpool all that ample chasm;
Stair above stair the eddying waters rose,
Circling immeasurably fast, and laved
With alternating dash the gnarled roots
Of mighty trees, that stretched their giant arms
In darkness over it. I'the midst was left,
Reflecting, yet distorting every cloud,
A pool of treacherous and tremendous calm.
Seized by the sway of the ascending stream,
With dizzy swiftness, round, and round,
and round,
Ridge after ridge the straining boat
arose,
Till on the verge of the extremest curve,
Where, through an opening of the rocky bank,
The waters overflow, and a smooth spot
Of glassy quiet mid those battling tides

THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE

Is left, the boat paused shuddering.—
 Shall it sink
Down the abyss? Shall the reverting
 stress
Of that resistless gulph embosom it?
Now shall it fall?—A wandering stream
 of wind,
Breathed from the west, has caught the
 expanding sail,
And, lo! with gentle motion, between
 banks
Of mossy slope, and on a placid stream,
Beneath a woven grove it sails, and,
 hark!
The ghastly torrent mingles its far roar
With the breeze murmuring in the musical
 woods.
Where the embowering trees recede, and
 leave
A little space of green expanse, the cove
Is closed by meeting banks, whose yellow
 flowers
For ever gaze on their own drooping
 eyes,
Reflected in the crystal calm. The wave
Of the boat's motion marred their pensive
 task,
Which nought but vagrant bird, or wanton
 wind,
Or falling spear-grass, or their own decay

ALASTOR: OR

Had e'er disturbed before. The Poet
 longed
To deck with their bright hues his
 withered hair,
But on his heart its solitude returned,
And he forebore. Not the strong impulse
 hid
In those flushed cheeks, bent eyes, and
 shadowy frame
Had yet performed its ministry: it hung
Upon his life, as lightning in a cloud
Gleams, hovering ere it vanish, ere the
 floods
Of night close over it.

 The noonday sun
Now shone upon the forest, one vast mass
Of mingling shade, whose brown magnifi-
 cence
A narrow vale embosoms. There, huge
 caves,
Scooped in the dark base of their aëry
 rocks
Mocking its moans, respond and roar for
 ever.
The meeting boughs and implicated leaves
Wove twilight o'er the Poet's path, as led
By love, or dream, or god, or mightier
 Death,
He sought in Nature's dearest haunt,
 some bank,

THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE

Her cradle, and his sepulchre. More dark
And dark the shades accumulate. The
oak,
Expanding its immense and knotty arms,
Embraces the light beech. The pyramids
Of the tall cedar overarching frame
Most solemn domes within, and far below,
Like clouds suspended in an emerald sky,
The ash and the acacia floating hang
Tremulous and pale. Like restless ser-
pents, clothed
In rainbow and in fire, the parasites,
Starr'd with ten thousand blossoms, flow
around
The gray trunks, and, as gamesome
infants' eyes,
With gentle meanings, and most innocent
wiles,
Fold their beams round the hearts of
those that love,
These twine their tendrils with the wedded
boughs
Uniting their close union; the woven
leaves
Make net-work of the dark blue light of
day,
And the night's noontide clearness, mutable
As shapes in the weird clouds. Soft mossy
lawns
Beneath these canopies extend their swells,

ALASTOR: OR

Fragrant with perfumed herbs, and eyed
with blooms

Minute yet beautiful. One darkest glen
Sends from its woods of musk-rose, twined
with jasmine,

A soul-dissolving odour, to invite
To some more lovely mystery. Through
the dell,

Silence and Twilight here, twin-sisters,
keep

Their noonday watch, and sail among the
shades,

Like vaporous shapes half seen; beyond,
a well,

Dark, gleaming, and of most translucent
wave,

Images all the woven boughs above,
And each depending leaf, and every speck
Of azure sky, darting between their
chasms;

Nor aught else in the liquid mirror laves
Its portraiture, but some inconstant star
Between one foliaged lattice twinkling
fair,

Or painted bird, sleeping beneath the
moon,

Or gorgeous insect floating motionless,
Unconscious of the day, ere yet his wings
Have spread their glories to the gaze of
noon.

THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE

Hither the Poet came. His eyes beheld
Their own wan light through the reflected
lines

Of his thin hair, distinct in the dark
depth

Of that still fountain; as the human
heart,

Gazing in dreams over the gloomy grave,
Sees its own treacherous likeness there.

He heard

The motion of the leaves, the grass that
sprung

Startled and glanced and trembled even
to feel

An unaccustomed presence, and the sound
Of the sweet brook that from the secret
springs

Of that dark fountain rose. A Spirit
seemed

To stand beside him—clothed in no bright
robes

Of shadowy silver or enshrining light,
Borrowed from aught the visible world
affords

Of grace, or majesty, or mystery;—

But undulating woods, and silent well,

And leaping rivulet, and evening gloom

Now deepening the dark shades, for
speech assuming,

Held commune with him, as if he and it

ALASTOR: OR

Were all that was,—only . . . when his
regard
Was raised by intense pensiveness, . . .
two eyes,
Two starry eyes, hung in the gloom of
thought,
And seemed with their serene and azure
smiles
To beckon him.

Obedient to the light
That shone within his soul, he went,
pursuing
The windings of the dell.—The rivulet
Wanton and wild, through many a green
ravine
Beneath the forest flowed. Sometimes
it fell
Among the moss with hollow harmony
Dark and profound. Now on the polished
stones
It danced; like childhood laughing as it
went:
Then through the plain in tranquil wan-
derings crept,
Reflecting every herb and drooping bud
That overhung its quietness.—“O stream!
Whose source is inaccessibly profound,
Whither do thy mysterious waters tend?

THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE

Thou imagest my life. Thy darksome
stillness,
Thy dazzling waves, thy loud and hollow
gulphs,
Thy searchless fountain, and invisible
course
Have each their type in me: and the
wide sky,
And measureless ocean may declare as
soon
What oozy cavern or what wandering
cloud
Contains thy waters, as the universe
Tell where these living thoughts reside,
when stretched
Upon thy flowers my bloodless limbs shall
waste
I' the passing wind!"

Beside the grassy shore
Of the small stream he went; he did
impress
On the green moss his tremulous step,
that caught
Strong shuddering from his burning
limbs. As one
Roused by some joyous madness from the
couch
Of fever, he did move; yet not like him

ALASTOR: OR

Forgetful of the grave, where, when the
flame

Of his frail exultation shall be spent,
He must descend. With rapid steps he
went

Beneath the shade of trees, beside the
flow

Of the wild babbling rivulet; and now
The forest's solemn canopies were changed
For the uniform and lightsome evening
sky.

Gray rocks did peep from the spare moss,
and stemmed

The struggling brook: tall spires of windle-
strae

Threw their thin shadows down the rugged
slope,

And nought but gnarled roots of ancient
pines

Branchless and blasted, clenched with
grasping roots

The unwilling soil. A gradual change
was here,

Yet ghastly. For, as fast years flow
away,

The smooth brow gathers, and the hair
grows thin

And white, and where irradiate dewy eyes
Had shone, gleam stony orbs:—so from
his steps

THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE

Bright flowers departed, and the beautiful shade
Of the green groves, with all their odorous winds
And musical motions. Calm, he still pursued
The stream, that with a larger volume now
Rolled through the labyrinthine dell, and there
Fretted a path through its descending curves
With its wintry speed. On every side now rose
Rocks, which, in unimaginable forms,
Lifted their black and barren pinnacles
In the light of evening, and, its precipice
Obscuring the ravine, disclosed above,
'Mid toppling stones, black gulphs and yawning caves,
Whose windings gave ten thousand various tongues
To the loud stream. Lo! where the pass expands
Its stony jaws, the abrupt mountain breaks,
And seems, with its accumulated crags,
To overhang the world: for wide expand
Beneath the wan stars and descending moon

ALASTOR: OR

Islanded seas, blue mountains, mighty
streams,
Dim tracts and vast, robed in the lustrous
gloom
Of leaden-coloured even, and fiery hills
Mingling their flames with twilight, on
the verge
Of the remote horizon. The near scene,
In naked and severe simplicity,
Made contrast with the universe. A pine,
Rock-rooted, stretched athwart the vacancy
Its swinging boughs, to each inconstant
blast
Yielding one only response, at each pause
In most familiar cadence, with the howl,
The thunder and the hiss of homeless
streams
Mingling its solemn song, whilst the broad
river,
Foaming and hurrying o'er its rugged
path,
Fell into that immeasurable void
Scattering its waters to the passing winds.

Yet the gray precipice and solemn pine
And torrent were not all;—one silent nook
Was there. Even on the edge of that
vast mountain,
Upheld by knotty roots and fallen rocks,
It overlooked in its serenity

THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE

The dark earth, and the bending vault of
stars.

It was a tranquil spot, that seemed to
smile

Even in the lap of horror. Ivy clasped
The fissured stones with its entwining
arms,

And did embower with leaves for ever
green,

And berries dark, the smooth and even
space

Of its inviolated floor, and here

The children of the autumnal whirlwind
bore,

In wanton sport, those bright leaves,
whose decay,

Red, yellow, or ethereally pale,

Rivals the pride of summer. 'Tis the
haunt

Of every gentle wind, whose breath can
teach

The wilds to love tranquillity. One step,

One human step alone, has ever broken

The stillness of its solitude:—one voice

Alone inspired its echoes;—even that voice

Which hither came, floating among the
winds,

And led the loveliest among human forms

To make their wild haunts the depository

Of all the grace and beauty that endued

ALASTOR: OR

Its motions, render up its majesty,
Scatter its music on the unfeeling storm,
And to the damp leaves and blue cavern
mould,
Nurses of rainbow flowers and branching
moss,
Commit the colours of that varying cheek,
That snowy breast, those dark and droop-
ing eyes.

The dim and hornèd moon hung low,
and poured
A sea of lustre on the horizon's verge
That overflowed its mountains. Yellow
mist
Filled the unbounded atmosphere, and
drank
Wan moonlight even to fulness: not a star
Shone, not a sound was heard; the very
winds,
Danger's grim playmates, on that pre-
cipice
Slept, clasped in his embrace.—O, storm
of death!
Whose sightless speed divides this sullen
night:
And thou, colossal Skeleton, that, still
Guiding its irresistible career
In thy devastating omnipotence,

THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE

Art king of this frail world, from the red
field

Of slaughter, from the reeking hospital,
The patriot's sacred couch, the snowy bed
Of innocence, the scaffold and the throne,
A mighty voice invokes thee. Ruin calls
His brother Death. A rare and regal prey
He hath prepared, prowling around the
world;

Glutted with which thou mayest repose,
and men

Go to their graves like flowers or creep-
ing worms,

Nor ever more offer at thy dark shrine
The unheeded tribute of a broken heart.

When on the threshold of the green
recess

The wanderer's footsteps fell, he knew
that death

Was on him. Yet a little, ere it fled,
Did he resign his high and holy soul
To images of the majestic past,
That paused within his passive being now,
Like winds that bear sweet music, when
they breathe

Through some dim latticed chamber. He
did place

His pale lean hand upon the rugged trunk
Of the old pine. Upon an ivied stone

ALASTOR: OR

Reclined his languid head, his limbs did
rest,
Diffused and motionless, on the smooth
brink
Of that obscurest chasm;—and thus he
lay,
Surrendering to their final impulses
The hovering powers of life. Hope and
despair,
The torturers, slept; no mortal pain or
fear
Marred his repose, the influxes of sense,
And his own being unalloyed by pain,
Yet feebler and more feeble, calmly fed
The stream of thought, till he lay breath-
ing there
At peace, and faintly smiling:—his last
sight
Was the great moon, which o'er the
western lip
Of the wide world her mighty horn sus-
pended,
With whose dun beams inwoven darkness
seemed
To mingle. Now upon the jagged hills
It rests, and still as the divided frame
Of the vast meteor sunk, the Poet's blood,
That ever beat in mystic sympathy
With nature's ebb and flow, grew feebler
still:

THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE

And when two lessening points of light
alone
Gleamed through the darkness, the alter-
nate gasp
Of his faint respiration scarce did stir
The stagnate night:—till the minutest
ray
Was quenched, the pulse yet lingered in
his heart.
It paused—it fluttered. But when heaven
remained
Utterly black, the murky shades involved
An image; silent, cold, and motionless,
As their own voiceless earth and vacant
air.
Even as a vapour fed with golden beams
That ministered on sunlight, ere the west
Eclipses it, was now that wondrous
frame—
No sense, no motion, no divinity—
A fragile lute, on whose harmonious
strings
The breath of heaven did wander—a bright
stream
Once fed with many-voiced waves—a
dream
Of youth, which night and time have
quenched for ever,
Still, dark, and dry, and unremembered
now.

ALASTOR: OR

O, for Medea's wondrous alchemy,
Which wheresoe'er it fell made the earth
gleam
With bright flowers, and the wintry
boughs exhale
From vernal blooms fresh fragrance! O,
that God,
Profuse of poisons, would concede the
chalice
Which but one living man has drained,
who now,
Vessel of deathless wrath, a slave that
feels
No proud exemption in the blighting curse
He bears, over the world wanders for
ever,
Lone as incarnate death! O, that the
dream
Of dark magician in his visioned cave,
Raking the cinders of a crucible
For life and power, even when his feeble
hand
Shakes in its last decay, were the true
law
Of this so lovely world! But thou art fled
Like some frail exhalation; which the
dawn
Robes in its golden beams,—ah! thou
hast fled!
The brave, the gentle, and the beautiful,

THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE

The child of grace and genius. Heartless
things
Are done and said i' the world, and many
worms
And beasts and men live on, and mighty
Earth
From sea and mountain, city and wilder-
ness,
In vesper low or joyous orison,
Lifts still its solemn voice:—but thou art
fled—
Thou canst no longer know or love the
shapes
Of this phantasmal scene, who have to
thee
Been purest ministers, who are, alas!
Now thou art not. Upon those pallid
lips
So sweet even in their silence, on those
eyes
That image sleep in death, upon that form
Yet safe from the worm's outrage, let no
tear
Be shed—not even in thought. Nor,
when those hues
Are gone, and those divinest lineaments,
Worn by the senseless wind, shall live
alone
In the frail pauses of this simple strain,
Let not high verse, mourning the memory

ALASTOR

Of that which is no more, or painting's
 woe,
Or sculpture, speak in feeble imagery
Their own cold powers. Art and elo-
 quence
And all the shows o' the world are frail
 and vain
To weep a loss that turns their lights to
 shade.
It is a woe too "deep for tears", when all
Is left at once, when some surpassing
 Spirit,
Whose light adorned the world around it,
 leaves
Those who remain behind, not sobs or
 groans,
The passionate tumult of a clinging hope;
But pale despair and cold tranquillity,
Nature's vast frame, the web of human
 things,
Birth and the grave, that are not as they
 were.

Epipsychidion

VERSES ADDRESSED TO THE
NOBLE AND UNFORTUNATE
LADY, ANNE V —, NOW
IMPRISONED IN THE CONVENT
OF —.¹

L'anima amante si slancia fuori del creato, e si crea nel
infinito un Mondo tutto per essa, diverso assai da questo
oscuro e pauroso baratro.—HER OWN WORDS.

My Song, I fear that thou wilt find but
few
Who fitly shall conceive thy reasoning,
Of such hard matter dost thou entertain;
Whence, if by misadventure, chance should
bring
Thee to base company (as chance may do),
Quite unaware of what thou dost contain,
I prithee, comfort thy sweet self again,
My last delight! tell them that they are
dull,
And bid them own that thou art beautiful.

Sweet Spirit! Sister of that orphan one,
Whose empire is the name thou weepest
on,
In my heart's temple I suspend to thee
These votive wreaths of withered memory.

¹ 1821.

EPIPSYCHIDION

Poor captive bird! who, from thy narrow
cage,

Pourest such music, that it might assuage
The rugged hearts of those who prisoned
thee,

Were they not deaf to all sweet melody;
This song shall be thy rose: its petals pale
Are dead, indeed, my adored Nightingale!
But soft and fragrant is the faded blossom,
And it has no thorn left to wound thy
bosom.

High, spirit-winged Heart! who dost
for ever

Beat thine unfeeling bars with vain en-
deavour,

Till those bright plumes of thought, in
which arrayed

It over-soared this low and worldly shade,
Lie shattered; and thy panting, wounded
breast

Stains with dear blood its unmaternal nest!
I weep vain tears: blood would less bitter
be,

Yet poured forth gladlier, could it profit
thee.

Seraph of Heaven! too gentle to be
human,

Veiling beneath that radiant form of
Woman

EPIPSYCHIDION

All that is insupportable in thee
Of light, and love, and immortality!
Sweet Bened. ~~mid dark frowns?~~ a gentle tone
Veiled Glory ~~o~~ voices? a beloved light?
Thou Moon bey^d Refuge, a Delight?
 living Form those whom Love has
Among the Dead! Th
 Storm! soothe the roughest
Thou Wonder, and thou Bea
 Terror! ep? a buried
Thou Harmony of Nature's art
 Mirror wingless
In whom, as in the splendour of — I
 Sun,
All shapes look glorious which thou gazest
 on!
Ay, even the dim words which obscure
 thee now
Flash, lightning-like, with unaccustomed
 glow;
I pray thee that thou blot from this sad
 song
All of its much mortality and wrong,
With those clear drops, which start like
 sacred dew
From the twin lights thy sweet soul
 darkens through,
Weeping, till sorrow becomes ecstasy:
Then smile on it, so that it may not
 die.

EPIPSYCHIDION

I never thought before my death to see
Youth's vision thus made perfect. Emily,

Pourest such music, that it is by no thin
The rugged hearts of th^eom its unvalued
thee,

Were they not dear
This song shall h^{ad} been twins of the

Are dead, inder
But soft and me my heart lent to another
And it h^{is} sister's bond for her and thee,
two beams of one eternity!

be^{or} ere one lawful and the other true,
The names, though dear, could paint
not, as is due,

How beyond refuge I am thine. Ah me!
I am not thine: I am a part of *thee*.

Sweet Lamp! my moth-like Muse has
burnt its wings;
Or, like a dying swan who soars and
sings,

Young Love should teach Time, in his
own gray style,

All that thou art. Art thou not void of guile,
A lovely soul formed to be blest and bless?
A well of sealed and secret happiness,
Whose waters like blithe light and music
are,

Vanquishing dissonance and gloom? A
Star

EPIPSYCHIDION

Which moves not in the moving Heavens,
alone?

A smile amid dark frowns? a gentle tone
Amid rude voices? a beloved light?

A Solitude, a Refuge, a Delight?

A Lute, which those whom Love has
taught to play

Make music on, to soothe the roughest
day

And lull fond grief asleep? a buried
treasure?

A cradle of young thoughts of wingless
pleasure?

A violet-shrouded grave of Woe?—I
measure

The world of fancies, seeking one like
thee,

And find—alas! mine own infirmity.

She met me, Stranger, upon life's rough
way,

And lured me toward sweet Death; as
Night by Day,

Winter by Spring, or Sorrow by swift
Hope,

Led into light, life, peace. An antelope,
In the suspended impulse of its lightness,
Were less ethereally light: the brightness
Of her divinest presence trembles through
Her limbs, as underneath a cloud of dew

EPIPSYCHIDION

Embodied in the windless Heaven of June
Amid the splendour-wingèd stars, the
Moon

Burns, inextinguishably beautiful:
And from her lips, as from a hyacinth full
Of honey-dew, a liquid murmur drops,
Killing the sense with passion; sweet as
stops

Of planetary music heard in trance.
In her mild lights the starry spirits dance,
The sunbeams of those wells which ever
leap

Under the lightnings of the soul—too deep
For the brief fathom-line of thought or
sense.

The glory of her being, issuing thence,
Stains the dead, blank, cold air with a
warm shade

Of unentangled intermixture, made
By Love, of light and motion: one intense
Diffusion, one serene Omnipresence,
Whose flowing outlines mingle in their
flowing

Around her cheeks and utmost fingers
glowing

With the unintermitted blood, which there
Quivers (as in a fleece of snow-like air
The crimson pulse of living morning
quiver),

Continuously prolonged, and ending never,

EPIPSYCHIDION

Till they are lost, and in that Beauty
furl'd

Which penetrates and clasps and fills the
world;

Scarce visible from extreme loveliness.

Warm fragrance seems to fall from her
light dress

And her loose hair; and where some heavy
tress

The air of her own speed has disen-
twined,

The sweetness seems to satiate the faint
wind;

And in the soul a wild odour is felt,

Beyond the sense, like fiery dews that
melt

Into the bosom of a frozen bud.—

See where she stands! a mortal shape
indued

With love and life and light and deity,

And motion which may change but can-
not die;

An image of some bright Eternity;

A shadow of some golden dream; a Splen-
dour

Leaving the third sphere pilotless; a
tender

Reflection of the eternal Moon of Love

Under whose motions life's dull billows
move;

EPIPSYCHIDION

A Metaphor of Spring and Youth and
Morning;
A Vision like incarnate April, warning,
With smiles and tears, Frost the Anatomy
Into his summer grave.

Ah, woe is me!
What have I dared? where am I lifted?
how
Shall I descend, and perish not? I know
That Love makes all things equal: I have
heard
By mine own heart this joyous truth
averred:
The spirit of the worm beneath the sod
In love and worship blends itself with God.

Spouse! Sister! Angel! Pilot of the Fate
Whose course has been so starless! Oh,
too late
Belovèd! Oh, too soon adored, by me!
For in the fields of immortality
My spirit should at first have worshipped
thine,
A divine presence in a place divine;
Or should have moved beside it on this
earth,
A shadow of that substance, from its birth;
But not as now:—I love thee; yes, I feel
That on the fountain of my heart a seal

EPIPSYCHIDION

Is set, to keep its waters pure and bright
For thee, since in those *tears* thou hast
delight.

We—are we not formed, as notes of music
are,

For one another, though dissimilar;
Such difference without discord, as can
make

Those sweetest sounds, in which all spirits
shake

As trembling leaves in a continuous air?

Thy wisdom speaks in me, and bids me
dare

Beacon the rocks on which high hearts
are wrecked.

I never was attached to that great sect,
Whose doctrine is, that each one should
select

Out of the crowd a mistress or a friend,
And all the rest, though fair and wise,
commend

To cold oblivion, though it is in the code
Of modern morals, and the beaten road
Which those poor slaves with weary foot-
steps tread,

Who travel to their home among the dead
By the broad highway of the world, and
so

EPIPSYCHIDION

With one chained friend, perhaps a jealous
foe,
The dreariest and the longest journey go.

True Love in this differs from gold and
clay,
That to divide is not to take away.
Love is like understanding, that grows
bright,
Gazing on many truths; 't is like thy light,
Imagination! which from earth and sky,
And from the depths of human phantasy,
As from a thousand prisms and mirrors,
fills
The Universe with glorious beams, and
kills
Error, the worm, with many a sun-like
arrow
Of its reverberated lightning. Narrow
The heart that loves, the brain that con-
templates,
The life that wears, the spirit that creates
One object, and one form, and builds
thereby
A sepulchre for its eternity.

Mind from its object differs most in this:
Evil from good; misery from happiness;

ÉPIPSYCHIDION

The baser from the nobler; the impure
And frail, from what is clear and must
endure.

If you divide suffering and dross, you may
Diminish till it is consumed away;

If you divide pleasure and love and
thought,

Each part exceeds the whole; and we
know not

How much, while any yet remains un-
shared,

Of pleasure may be gained, of sorrow
spared:

This truth is that deep well, whence sages
draw

The unenvied light of hope; the eternal law
By which those live, to whom this world
of life

Is as a garden ravaged, and whose strife
Tills for the promise of a later birth
The wilderness of this Elysian earth.

There was a Being whom my spirit oft
Met on its visioned wanderings, far aloft,
In the clear golden prime of my youth's
dawn,

Upon the fairy isles of sunny lawn,
Amid the enchanted mountains, and the
caves

Of divine sleep, and on the air-like waves

EPIPSYCHIDION

Of wonder-level dream, whose tremulous
floor

Paved her light steps;—on an imagined
shore,

Under the gray beak of some promon-
tory

She met me, robed in such exceeding
glory,

That I beheld her not. In solitudes

Her voice came to me through the whis-
pering woods,

And from the fountains, and the odours
deep

Of flowers, which, like lips murmuring
in their sleep

Of the sweet kisses which had lulled them
there,

Breathed but of *her* to the enamoured air;

And from the breezes whether low or loud,

And from the rain of every passing cloud,

And from the singing of the summer birds,

And from all sounds, all silence. In the
words

Of antique verse and high romance,—in
form,

Sound, colour—in whatever checks that
Storm

Which with the shattered present chokes
the past;

And in that best philosophy, whose taste

EPIPSYCHIDION

Makes this cold common hell, our life, a
doom
As glorious as a fiery martyrdom;
Her Spirit was the harmony of truth.—

Then, from the caverns of my dreamy
youth
I sprang, as one sandalled with plumes of
fire,
And towards the loadstar of my one desire,
I flitted, like a dizzy moth, whose flight
Is as a dead leaf's in the owlet light,
When it would seek in Hesper's setting
sphere
A radiant death, a fiery sepulchre,
As if it were a lamp of earthly flame.—
But She, whom prayers or tears then could
not tame,
Past, like a God throned on a wingèd
planet,
Whose burning plumes to tenfold swift-
ness fan it,
Into the dreary cone of our life's shade;
And as a man with mighty loss dis-
mayed,
I would have followed, though the grave
between
Yawned like a gulf whose spectres are un-
seen:

EPIPSYCHIDION

When a voice said:—"O Thou of hearts
the weakest,
The phantom is beside thee whom thou
seekest."
Then I—"Where?" the world's echo an-
swered "where!"
And in that silence, and in my de-
spair,
I questioned every tongueless wind that
flew
Over my tower of mourning, if it knew
Whither 'twas fled, this soul out of my
soul;
And murmured names and spells which
have control
Over the sightless tyrants of our fate;
But neither prayer nor verse could dissi-
pate
The night which closed on her; nor un-
create
That world within this Chaos, mine and
me,
Of which she was the veiled Divinity,
The world I say of thoughts that wor-
shipped her:
And therefore I went forth, with hope and
fear
And every gentle passion sick to death,
Feeding my course with expectation's
breath,

EPIPSYCHIDION

Into the wintry forest of our life,
And struggling through its error with vain
 strife,
And stumbling in my weakness and my
 haste,
And half bewildered by new forms, I past
Seeking among those untaught foresters
If I could find one form resembling
 hers,
In which she might have masked herself
 from me.
There,—One, whose voice was venomed
 melody
Sate by a well, under blue nightshade
 bowers;
The breath of her false mouth was like
 faint flowers,
Her touch was as electric poison,—flame
Out of her looks into my vitals came,
And from her living cheeks and bosom
 flew
A killing air, which pierced like honey-
 dew
Into the core of my green heart, and
 lay
Upon its leaves; until, as hair grown
 gray
O'er a young brow, they hid its unblown
 prime
With ruins of unseasonable time.

EPIPSYCHIDION

In many mortal forms I rashly sought
The shadow of that idol of my thought.
And some were fair—but beauty dies
away:

Others were wise—but honeyed words
betray:

And One was true—oh! why not true to
me?

Then, as a hunted deer that could not flee,
I turned upon my thoughts and stood at
bay,

Wounded and weak and panting; the cold
day

Trembled, for pity of my strife and pain.
When, like a noonday dawn, there shone
again

Deliverance. One stood on my path who
seemed

As like the glorious shape which I had
dreamed,

As is the Moon, whose changes ever run
Into themselves, to the eternal Sun;

The cold chaste Moon, the Queen of
Heaven's bright isles,

Who makes all beautiful on which she
smiles,

That wandering shrine of soft yet icy
flame

Which ever is transformed, yet still the
same,

EPIPSYCHIDION

And warms not but illumines. Young
and fair

As the descended 'Spirit of that sphere,
She hid me, as the Moon may hide the
night

From its own darkness, until all was
bright

Between the Heaven and Earth of my
calm mind,

And, as a cloud, charioted by the wind,
She led me to a cave in that wild place,
And sate beside me, with her downward
face

Illumining my slumbers, like the Moon
Waxing and waning o'er Endymion.

And I was laid asleep, spirit and limb,
And all my being became bright or dim
As the Moon's image in a summer sea,
According as she smiled or frowned on
me;

And there I lay, within a chaste cold
bed:

Alas, I then was nor alive nor dead:—
For at her silver voice came Death and
Life,

Unmindful each of their accustomed strife,
Masked like twin babes, a sister and a
brother,

The wandering hopes of one abandoned
mother,

EPIPSYCHIDION

And through the cavern without wings
they flew,
And cried "Away, he is not of our crew."
I wept, and though it be a dream, I weep.

What storms then shook the ocean of
my sleep,
Blotting that Moon, whose pale and wan-
ing lips
Then shrank as in the sickness of eclipse;—
And how my soul was as a lampless sea,
And who was then its Tempest; and when
She,
The Planet of that hour, was quenched,
what frost
Crept o'er those waters, till from coast to
coast
The moving billows of my being fell
Into a death of ice, immovable;—
And then—what earthquakes made it gape
and split,
The white Moon smiling all the while on it,
These words conceal:—If not, each word
would be
The key of staunchless tears. Weep not
for me!

At length, into the obscure Forest came
The Vision I had sought through grief
and shame.

EPIPSYCHIDION

Athwart that wintry wilderness of thorns
Flashed from her motion splendour like
the Morn's,

And from her presence life was radiated
Through the gray earth and branches bare
and dead;

So that her way was paved, and roofed
above

With flowers as soft as thoughts of bud-
ding love;

And music from her respiration spread
Like light,—all other sounds were pene-
trated

By the small, still sweet spirit of that
sound,

So that the savage winds hung mute
around;

And odours warm and fresh fell from
her hair

Dissolving the dull cold in the frore air:
Soft as an Incarnation of the Sun,
When light is changed to love, this glo-
rious One

Floated into the cavern where I lay,
And called my Spirit, and the dreaming
clay

Was lifted by the thing that dreamed be-
low

As smoke by fire, and in her beauty's
glow

EPIPSYCHIDION

I stood, and felt the dawn of my long
night
Was penetrating me with living light:
I knew it was the Vision veiled from me
So many years—that it was Emily.

Twin Spheres of light who rule this
passive Earth,
This world of love, this *me*; and into birth
Awaken all its fruits and flowers, and
dart
Magnetic might into its central heart;
And lift its billows and its mists, and
guide
By everlasting laws, each wind and tide
To its fit cloud, and its appointed cave;
And lull its storms, each in the craggy
grave
Which was its cradle, luring to faint
bowers
The armies of the rainbow-wingèd showers;
And, as those married lights, which from
the towers
Of Heaven look forth and fold the wander-
ing globe
In liquid sleep and splendour, as a robe;
And all their many-mingled influence
blend,
If equal, yet unlike, to one sweet end;—

EPIPSYCHIDION

So ye, bright regents, with alternate sway
Govern my sphere of being, night and
day!

Thou, not disdaining even a borrowed
might;

Thou, not eclipsing a remoter light;
And, through the shadow of the seasons
three,

From Spring to Autumn's sere maturity,
Light it into the Winter of the tomb,
Where it may ripen to a brighter bloom.
Thou too, O Comet beautiful and fierce,
Who drew the heart of this frail Universe
Towards thine own; till, wrecked in that
convulsion,

Alternating attraction and repulsion,
Thine went astray and that was rent in
twain;

Oh, float into our azure heaven again!
Be there love's folding-star at thy return;
The living Sun will feed thee from its
urn

Of golden fire; the Moon will veil her
horn

In thy last smiles; adoring Even and
Morn

Will worship thee with incense of calm
breath

And lights and shadows; as the star of
Death

EPIPSYCHIDION

And Birth is worshipped by those sisters
wild
Called Hope and Fear—upon the heart
are piled
Their offerings,—of this sacrifice divine
A World shall be the altar.

Lady mine,
Scorn not these flowers of thought, the
fading birth
Which from its heart of hearts that plant
puts forth
Whose fruit, made perfect by thy sunny
eyes,
Will be as of the trees of Paradise.

The day is come, and thou wilt fly with
me.
To whatsoever of dull mortality
Is mine, remain a vestal sister still;
To the intense, the deep, the imperish-
able,
Not mine but me, henceforth be thou
united
Even as a bride, delighting and delighted.
The hour is come:—the destined Star has
risen
Which shall descend upon a vacant prison.
The walls are high, the gates are strong,
thick set
The sentinels—but true love never yet

EPIPSYCHIDION

Was thus constrained: it overleaps all
fence:

Like lightning, with invisible violence
Piercing its continents; like Heaven's free
breath,

Which he who grasps can hold not; liker
Death,

Who rides upon a thought, and makes
his way

Through temple, tower, and palace, and
the array

Of arms: more strength has Love than
he or they;

For it can burst his charnel, and make
free

The limbs in chains, the heart in
agony,

The soul in dust and chaos.

Emily,

A ship is floating in the harbour now,
A wind is hovering o'er the mountain's
brow;

There is a path on the sea's azure
floor,

No keel has ever ploughed that path be-
fore;

The halcyons brood around the foamless
isles;

The treacherous Ocean has forsworn its
wiles;

EPIPSYCHIDION

The merry mariners are bold and free:
Say, my heart's sister, wilt thou sail with
me?

Our bark is as an albatross, whose nest
Is a far Eden of the purple East;
And we between her wings will sit, while
Night

And Day, and Storm, and Calm, pursue
their flight,

Our ministers, along the boundless Sea,
Treading each other's heels, unheededly.
It is an isle under Ionian skies,
Beautiful as a wreck of Paradise,
And, for the harbours are not safe and
good,

This land would have remained a solitude
But for some pastoral people native there,
Who from the Elysian, clear, and golden
air

Draw the last spirit of the age of gold,
Simple and spirited; innocent and bold.
The blue Ægean girds this chosen home,
With ever-changing sound and light and
foam,

Kissing the sifted sands and caverns hoar;
And all the winds wandering along the
shore

Undulate with the undulating tide:
There are thick woods where sylvan forms
abide;

EPIPSYCHIDION

And many a fountain, rivulet, and pond,
As clear as elemental diamond,
Or serene morning air; and far beyond,
The mossy tracks made by the goats and
deer

(Which the rough shepherd treads but
once a year),

Pierce into glades, caverns, and bowers,
and halls

Built round with ivy, which the water-
falls

Illumining, with sound that never fails
Accompany the noonday nightingales;
And all the place is peopled with sweet
airs;

The light clear element which the isle
wears

Is heavy with the scent of lemon-flowers,
Which floats like mist laden with unseen
showers

And falls upon the eyelids like faint sleep;
And from the moss violets and jonquils
peep,

And dart their arrowy odour through the
brain

Till you might faint with that delicious
pain.

And every motion, odour, beam, and
tone,

With that deep music is in unison:

EPIPSYCHIDION

Which is a soul within the soul—they
seem

Like echoes of an antenatal dream.—

It is an isle 'twixt Heaven, Air, Earth,
and Sea,

Cradled, and hung in clear tranquillity;
Bright as that wandering Eden Lucifer,
Washed by the soft blue Oceans of
young air.

It is a favoured place. Famine or
Blight,

Pestilence, War and Earthquake, never
light

Upon its mountain-peaks; blind vultures,
they

Sail onward far upon their fatal way:

The wingèd storms, chaunting their
thunder-psalm

To other lands, leave azure chasms of
calm

Over this isle, or weep themselves in
dew,

From which its fields and woods ever
renew

Their green and golden immortality.

And from the sea there rise, and from
the sky

There fall, clear exhalations, soft and
bright,

Veil after veil, each hiding some delight,

EPIPSYCHIDION

Which Sun or Moon or zephyr draw
aside,

Till the isle's beauty, like a naked bride
Glowing at once with love and loveliness,
Blushes and trembles at its own excess:
Yet, like a buried lamp, a Soul no less
Burns in the heart of this delicious isle,
An atom of th' Eternal, whose own smile
Unfolds itself, and may be felt, not seen,
O'er the gray rocks, blue waves, and
forests green,

Filling their bare and void interstices.—
But the chief marvel of the wilderness
Is a lone dwelling, built by whom or how
None of the rustic island-people know:
'Tis not a tower of strength, though with
its height

It overtops the woods; but, for delight,
Some wise and tender Ocean-King, ere
crime

Had been invented, in the world's young
prime,

Reared it, a wonder of that simple time,
An envy of the isles, a pleasure-house
Made sacred to his sister and his spouse.
It scarce seems now a wreck of human
art,

But, as it were Titanic; in the heart
Of Earth having assumed its form, then
grown

EPIPSYCHIDION

Out of the mountains, from the living
stone,
Lifting itself in caverns light and high:
For all the antique and learned imagery
Has been erased, and in the place of it
The ivy and the wild-vine interknit
The volumes of their many twining stems;
Parasite flowers illumine with dewy gems
The lampless halls, and when they fade,
the sky
Peeps through their winter-woof of tra-
cery
With Moonlight patches, or star atoms
keen,
Or fragments of the day's intense
serene;—
Working mosaic on their Parian floors.
And, day and night, aloof, from the high
towers
And terraces, the Earth and Ocean seem
To sleep in one another's arms, and
dream
Of waves, flowers, clouds, woods, rocks,
and all that we
Read in their smiles, and call reality.

This isle and house are mine, and I
have vowed
Thee to be lady of the solitude.—

EPIPSYCHIDION

And I have fitted up some chambers
there

Looking towards the golden Eastern air,
And level with the living winds, which
flow

Like waves above the living waves
below.—

I have sent books and music there, and
all

Those instruments with which high spirits
call

The future from its cradle, and the
past

Out of its grave, and make the present
last

In thoughts and joys which sleep, but
cannot die,

Folded within their own eternity.

Our simple life wants little, and true
taste

Hires not the pale drugge Luxury, to
waste

The scene it would adorn, and therefore
still,

Nature with all her children haunts the
hill.

The ring-dove, in the embowering ivy,
yet

Keeps up her love-lament, and the owls
flit

EPIPSYCHIDION

Round the evening tower, and the young
stars glance
Between the quick bats in their twilight
dance;
The spotted deer bask in the fresh moon-
light
Before our gate, and the slow, silent
night
Is measured by the pants of their calm
sleep.
Be this our home in life, and when years
heap
Their withered hours, like leaves, on our
decay,
Let us become the overhanging day,
The living soul of this Elysian isle,
Conscious, inseparable, one. Meanwhile
We two will rise, and sit, and walk
together,
Under the roof of blue Ionian weather,
And wander in the meadows, or ascend
The mossy mountains, where the blue
heavens bend
With lightest winds, to touch their para-
mour;
Or linger, where the pebble-paven shore,
Under the quick, faint kisses of the sea
Trembles and sparkles as with ecstasy,—
Possessing and possessed by all that is
Within that calm circumference of bliss,

EPIPSYCHIDION

And by each other, till to love and live
Be one:—or, at the noontide hour, arrive
Where some old cavern hoar seems yet
to keep

The moonlight of the expired night
asleep,

Through which the awakened day can
never peep;

A veil for our seclusion, close as Night's,
Where secure sleep may kill thine innocent
lights;

Sleep, the fresh dew of languid love, the
rain

Whose drops quench kisses till they burn
again.

And we will talk, until thought's melody
Become too sweet for utterance, and it die
In words, to live again in looks, which
dart

With thrilling tone into the voiceless
heart,

Harmonizing silence without a sound.

Our breath shall intermix, our bosoms
bound,

And our veins beat together; and our
lips

With other eloquence than words, eclipse
The soul that burns between them, and
the wells

Which boil under our being's inmost cells,

EPIPSYCHIDION

The fountains of our deepest life, shall be
Confused in passion's golden purity,
As mountain-springs under the morning
Sun.

We shall become the same, we shall be
one

Spirit within two frames, oh! wherefore
two?

One passion in twin-hearts, which grows
and grew,

Till like two meteors of expanding flame,
Those spheres instinct with it become the
same,

Touch, mingle, are transfigured; ever still
Burning, yet ever inconsumable:

In one another's substance finding food,
Like flames too pure and light and un-
imbued

To nourish their bright lives with baser prey,
Which point to Heaven and cannot pass
away:

One hope within two wills, one will
beneath

Two overshadowing minds, one life, one
death,

One Heaven, one Hell, one immortality,
And one annihilation. Woe is me!

The winged words on which my soul
would pierce

Into the height of love's rare Universe,

EPIPSYCHIDION

Are chains of lead around its flight of
fire—

I pant, I sink, I tremble, I expire!

Weak Verses, go, kneel at your Sovereign's feet,

And say:—"We are the masters of thy
slave;

What wouldest thou with us and ours
and thine?"

Then call your sisters from Oblivion's
cave,

All singing loud: "Love's very pain is
sweet.

But its reward is in the world divine
Which, if not here, it builds beyond the
grave."

So shall ye live when I am there. Then
haste

Over the hearts of men, until ye meet
Marina, Vanna, Primus, and the rest,
And bid them love each other, and be
blest:

And leave the troop which errs, and
which reproves,

And come and be my guest,—for I am
Love's.

Life of Life

FROM "PROMETHEUS
UNBOUND"

Life of Life! thy lips enkindle
With their love the breath between
them;
And thy smiles before they dwindle
Make the cold air fire; then screen
them
In those looks, where whoso gazes
Faints, entangled in their mazes.

Child of Light! thy limbs are burning
Thro' the vest which seems to hide
them;
As the radiant lines of morning
Thro' the clouds ere they divide them;
And this atmosphere divinest
Shrouds thee wheresoe'er thou shinest.

Fair are others; none beholds thee,
But thy voice sounds low and tender
Like the fairest, for it folds thee
From the sight, that liquid splendour,
And all feel, yet see thee never,
As I feel now, lost for ever!

LIFE OF LIFE

Lamp of Earth! where'er thou movest
 Its dim shapes are clad with brightness,
And the souls of whom thou lovest
 Walk upon the winds with lightness,
Till they fail, as I am failing,
Dizzy, lost, yet unbewailing!

The Pale Stars are Gone

FROM "PROMETHEUS
UNBOUND"

SCENE, A PART OF THE FOREST NEAR
THE CAVE OF PROMETHEUS. PAN-
THEA and IONE are sleeping: they
awaken gradually during the first
Song.

Voice of unseen Spirits

The pale stars are gone!
For the sun, their swift shepherd,
To their folds them compelling,
In the depths of the dawn,
Hastes, in meteor-eclipsing array and
they flee
Beyond his blue dwelling,
As fawns flee the leopard.
But where are ye?

*A Train of dark Forms and Shadows
passes by confusedly, singing*

Here, oh, here:
We bear the bier
Of the Father of many a cancelled year!

THE PALE STARS ARE GONE

Spectres we
Of the dead Hours be,
We bear Time to his tomb in eternity.

Strew, oh, strew
Hair, not yew!
Wet the dusty pall with tears, not dew!
Be the faded flowers
Of Death's bare bowers
Spread on the corpse of the King of
Hours!

Haste, oh, haste!
As shades are chased,
Trembling, by day, from heaven's blue
waste.

We melt away,
Like dissolving spray,
From the children of a diviner day,
With the lullaby
Of winds that die
On the bosom of their own harmony!

Ione

What dark forms were they?

Panthea

The past Hours weak and gray,
With the spoil which their toil
Raked together
From the conquest but One could foil.

THE PALE STARS ARE GONE

Ione

Have they past?

Panthea

They have past;
They outspeeded the blast,
While 'tis said, they are fled:

Ione

Whither, oh, whither?

Panthea

To the dark, to the past, to the dead.

Voice of unseen Spirits

Bright clouds float in heaven,
Dew-stars gleam on earth,
Waves assemble on ocean,
They are gathered and driven
By the storm of delight, by the panic of
glee!
They shake with emotion,
They dance in their mirth.
But where are ye?

The pine boughs are singing
Old songs with new gladness.
The billows and fountains
Fresh music are flinging,

THE PALE STARS ARE GONE

Like the notes of a spirit from land and
from sea;
The storms mock the mountains
With the thunder of gladness.
But where are ye?

Ione

What charioteers are these?

Panthea

Where are their chariots?

Semichorus of Hours

The voice of the Spirits of Air and of Earth
Have drawn back the figured curtain
of sleep
Which covered our being and darkened
our birth
In the deep.

A Voice

In the deep?

Semichorus II

Oh, below the deep.

Semichorus I

An hundred ages we had been kept
Cradled in visions of hate and care,

THE PALE STARS ARE GONE

And each one who waked as his brother
slept,
Found the truth—

Semichorus II

Worse than his visions were!

Semichorus I

We have heard the lute of Hope in sleep;
We have known the voice of Love in
dreams,
We have felt the wand of Power, and
leap—

Semichorus II

As the billows leap in the morning beams!

Chorus

Weave the dance on the floor of the breeze,
Pierce with song heaven's silent light,
Enchant the day that too swiftly flees,
To check its flight ere the cave of night.

Once the hungry Hours were hounds
Which chased the day like a bleeding
deer,
And it limped and stumbled with many
wounds
Through the nightly dells of the desert
year.

THE PALE STARS ARE GONE

But now, oh weave the mystic measure
Of music, and dance, and shapes of
light,
Let the Hours, and the spirits of might
and pleasure,
Like the clouds and sunbeams, unite.

A Voice

Unite!

Panthea

See, where the Spirits of the human mind
Wrapt in sweet sounds, as in bright veils,
approach.

Chorus of Spirits

We join the throng
Of the dance and the song,
By the whirlwind of gladness borne along;
As the flying-fish leap
From the Indian deep,
And mix with the sea-birds, half asleep.

Chorus of Hours

Whence come ye, so wild and so fleet,
For sandals of lightning are on your feet,
And your wings are soft and swift as
thought,
And your eyes are as love which is veiled
not?

THE PALE STARS ARE GONE

Chorus of Spirits

We come from the mind
Of human kind
Which was late so dusk, and obscene,
and blind,
Now 'tis an ocean
Of clear emotion,
A heaven of serene and mighty motion;

From that deep abyss
Of wonder and bliss,
Whose caverns are crystal palaces;
From those skiey towers
Where Thought's crowned powers
Sit watching your dance, ye happy Hours!

From the dim recesses
Of woven caresses,
Where lovers catch ye by your loose
tresses;
From the azure isles,
Where sweet Wisdom smiles,
Delaying your ships with her syren wiles;

From the temples high
Of Man's ear and eye,
Roofed over Sculpture and Poesy;
From the murmurings
Of the unsealed springs
Where Science bedews his Dædal wings.

THE PALE STARS ARE GONE

Years after years,
Through blood, and tears,
And a thick hell of hatreds, and hopes,
and fears;
We waded and flew,
And the islets were few
Where the bud-blighted flowers of happiness grew.

Our feet now, every palm,
Are sandalled with calm,
And the dew of our wings is a rain of balm;
And, beyond our eyes,
The human love lies
Which makes all it gazes on Paradise.

Chorus of Spirits and Hours

Then weave the web of the mystic measure;
From the depths of the sky and the ends
of the earth,
Come, swift Spirits of might and of pleasure,
Fill the dance and the music of mirth,
As the waves of a thousand streams
rush by
To an ocean of splendour and harmony!

THE PALE STARS ARE GONE

Chorus of Spirits

Our spoil is won,
Our task is done,
We are free to dive, or soar, or run;
Beyond and around,
Or within the bound
Which clips the world with darkness
round.

We'll pass the eyes
Of the starry skies
Into the hoar deep to colonize:
Death, Chaos, and Night,
From the sound of our flight,
Shall flee, like mist from a tempest's
might.

And Earth, Air, and Light,
And the Spirit of Might,
Which drives round the stars in their
fiery flight;
And Love, Thought, and Breath,
The powers that quell Death,
Wherever we soar shall assemble beneath.

And our singing shall build
In the void's loose field
A world for the Spirit of Wisdom to
wield;

THE PALE STARS ARE GONE

We will take our plan
From the new world of man,
And our work shall be called the Pro-
methean.

Chorus of Hours

Break the dance, and scatter the song;
Let some depart, and some remain.

Semichorus I

We, beyond heaven, are driven along:

Semichorus II

Us the enchantments of earth retain:

Semichorus I

Ceaseless, and rapid, and fierce, and free,
With the Spirits which build a new earth
and sea,
And a heaven where yet heaven could
never be.

Semichorus II

Solemn, and slow, and serene, and bright,
Leading the Day and outspeeding the
Night,
With the powers of a world of perfect
light.

THE PALE STARS ARE GONE

Semichorus I

We whirl, singing loud, round the gathering sphere,
Till the trees, and the beasts, and the clouds appear
From its chaos made calm by love, not fear.

Semichorus II

We encircle the ocean and mountains of earth,
And the happy forms of its death and birth
Change to the music of our sweet mirth.

Chorus of Hours and Spirits

Break the dance, and scatter the song,
Let some depart, and some remain,
Wherever we fly we lead along
In leashes, like starbeams, soft yet strong,
The clouds that are heavy with love's sweet rain.

Mont Blanc

LINES WRITTEN IN THE
VALE OF CHAMOUNI

The everlasting universe of things
Flows through the mind, and rolls its
 rapid waves,—
Now dark—now glittering—now reflecting
 gloom—
Now lending splendour, where from secret
 springs
The source of human thought its tribute
 brings
Of waters,—with a sound but half its
 own,
Such as a feeble brook will oft assume
In the wild woods, among the mountains
 lone,
Where waterfalls around it leap for ever,
Where woods and winds contend, and a
 vast river
Over its rocks ceaselessly bursts and raves.

II

Thus thou, Ravine of Arve—dark, deep
 Ravine—
Thou many-coloured, many-voiced vale,

MONT BLANC

Over whose pines, and crags, and caverns
sail
Fast cloud-shadows and sunbeams: awful
scene,
Where Power in likeness of the Arve
comes down
From the ice-gulphs that gird his secret
throne,
Bursting through these dark mountains
like the flame
Of lightning thro' the tempest;—thou
dost lie,
Thy giant brood of pines around thee
clinging,
Children of elder time, in whose devotion
The changeless winds still come and ever
came
To drink their odours, and their mighty
swinging
To hear—an old and solemn harmony;
Thine earthly rainbows stretched across
the sweep
Of the ethereal waterfall, whose veil
Robes some unsculptured image; the
strange sleep
Which, when the voices of the desert fail,
Wraps all in its own deep eternity;—
Thy caverns echoing to the Arve's com-
motion,
A loud, lone sound no other sound can tame;

MONT BLANC

Thou art pervaded with that ceaseless
motion,

Thou art the path of that unresting
sound—

Dizzy Ravine—and when I gaze on thee
I seem as in a trance sublime and strange
To muse on my own separate phantasy,
My own, my human mind, which passively
Now renders and receives fast influencings,
Holding an unremitting interchange
With the clear universe of things around;
One legion of wild thoughts, whose wan-
dering wings

Now float above thy darkness, and now
rest

Where that or thou art no unbidden guest,
In the still cave of the witch Poesy,
Seeking among the shadows that pass by
Ghosts of all things that are, some shade
of thee,

Some phantom, some faint image; till the
breast

From which they fled recalls them, thou
art there!

III

Some say that gleams of a remoter world
Visit the soul in sleep,—that death is
slumber,

MONT BLANC

And that its shapes the busy thoughts
outnumber
Of those who wake and live.—I look on
high;
Has some unknown omnipotence unfurled
The veil of life and death, or do I lie
In dream, and does the mightier world of
sleep
Spread far around and inaccessible
Its circles? For the very spirit fails,
Driven like a homeless cloud from steep
to steep
That vanishes among the viewless gales!
Far, far above, piercing the infinite sky,
Mont Blanc appears,—still, snowy, and
serene—
Its subject mountains their unearthly forms
Pile round it, ice and rock; broad vales
between
Of frozen floods, unfathomable deeps,
Blue as the overhanging heaven, that
spread
And wind among the accumulated steeps;
A desert peopled by the storms alone,
Save when the eagle brings some hunter's
bone,
And the wolf tracks her there—how hide-
ously
Its shapes are heaped around rude, bare,
and high,

MONT BLANC

Ghastly, and scarred, and riven.—Is this
the scene
Where the old Earthquake-dæmon taught
her young
Ruin? Were these their toys? or did a sea
Of fire envelope once this silent snow?
None can reply—all seems eternal now.
The wilderness has a mysterious tongue
Which teaches awful doubt, or faith so
mild,
So solemn, so serene, that man may be
But for such faith with nature reconciled:
Thou hast a voice, great Mountain, to
repeal
Large codes of fraud and woe; not under-
stood
By all, but which the wise, and great,
and good
Interpret, or make felt, or deeply feel.

IV

The fields, the lakes, the forests, and the
streams,
Ocean, and all the living things that
dwell
Within the dædal earth; lightning, and
rain,
Earthquake, and fiery flood, and hurricane,
The torpor of the year when feeble dreams

MONT BLANC

Visit the hidden buds, or dreamless sleep
Holds every future leaf and flower;—the
bound

With which from that detested trance they
leap;

The works and ways of man, their death
and birth,

And that of him and all that his may be;
All things that move and breathe with
toil and sound

Are born and die; revolve, subside, and
swell.

Power dwells apart in its tranquillity
Remote, serene, and inaccessible:

And *this*, the naked countenance of earth,
On which I gaze, even these primæval
mountains

Teach the adverting mind. The glaciers
creep

Like snakes that watch their prey, from
their far fountains,

Slow rolling on; there, many a precipice,
Frost and the Sun in scorn of mortal
power

Have piled: dome, pyramid, and pinnacle,
A city of death, distinct with many a tower
And wall impregnable of beaming ice.

Yet not a city, but a flood of ruin
Is there, that from the boundaries of the
sky

MONT BLANC

Rolls its perpetual stream; vast pines are
strewing

Its destined path, or in the mangled soil
Branchless and shattered stand; the rocks,
drawn down

From yon remotest waste, have over-
thrown

The limits of the dead and living world,
Never to be reclaimed. The dwelling-place
Of insects, beasts, and birds becomes its
spoil;

Their food and their retreat for ever gone,
So much of life and joy is lost. The race
Of man flies far in dread; his work and
dwelling

Vanish, like smoke before the tempest's
stream,

And their place is not known. Below, vast
caves

Shine in the rushing torrent's restless
gleam,

Which from those secret chasms in tumult
welling

Meet in the vale, and one majestic River,
The breath and blood of distant lands, for
ever

Rolls its loud waters to the ocean waves,
Breathes its swift vapours to the circling
air.

MONT BLANC

V

Mont Blanc yet gleams on high:—the
power is there,
The still and solemn power of many
sights,
And many sounds, and much of life and
death.
In the calm darkness of the moonless
nights,
In the long glare of day, the snows de-
scend
Upon that Mountain; none beholds them
there,
Nor when the flakes burn in the sinking sun,
Or the star-beams dart through them:—
Winds contend
Silently there, and heap the snow with
breath
Rapid and strong, but silently! Its home
The voiceless lightning in these solitudes
Keeps innocently, and like vapour broods
Over the snow. The secret strength of
things
Which governs thought, and to the infi-
nite dome
Of heaven is as a law, inhabits thee!
And what were thou, and earth, and stars,
and sea,
If to the human mind's imaginings
Silence and solitude were vacancy?

Marianne's Dream

A pale dream came to a Lady fair,
And said, A boon, a boon, I pray!
I know the secrets of the air,
And things are lost in the glare of day,
Which I can make the sleeping see,
If they will put their trust in me.

And thou shalt know of things unknown,
If thou wilt let me rest between
The veiny lids, whose fringe is thrown
Over thine eyes so dark and sheen:
And half in hope, and half in fright,
The Lady closed her eyes so bright.

At first all deadly shapes were driven
Tumultuously across her sleep,
And o'er the vast cope of bending heaven
All ghastly-visaged clouds did sweep;
And the Lady ever looked to spy
If the golden sun shone forth on high.

And as towards the east she turned, •
She saw aloft in the morning air,
Which now with hues of sunrise burned,
A great black Anchor rising there;

MARIANNE'S DREAM

And wherever the Lady turned her eyes,
It hung before her in the skies.

The sky was blue as the summer sea,
The depths were cloudless overhead,
The air was calm as it could be,
There was no sight or sound of dread,
But that black Anchor floating still
Over the piny eastern hill.

The Lady grew sick with a weight of fear,
To see that Anchor ever hanging,
And veiled her eyes; she then did hear
The sound as of a dim low clanging,
And looked abroad if she might know
Was it aught else, or but the flow
Of the blood in her own veins, to and fro.

There was a mist in the sunless air,
Which shook as it were with an earth-
quake's shock,
But the very weeds that blossomed there
Were moveless, and each mighty rock
Stood on its basis steadfastly;
The Anchor was seen no more on high.

But piled around, with summits hid
In lines of cloud at intervals,
Stood many a mountain pyramid
Among whose everlasting walls

MARIANNE'S DREAM

Two mighty cities shone, and ever
Through the red mist their domes did
quiver.

On two dread mountains, from whose
crest,

Might seem, the eagle, for her brood,
Would ne'er have hung her dizzy nest,

Those tower-encircled cities stood.
A vision strange such towers to see,
Sculptured and wrought so gorgeously,
Where human art could never be.

And columns framed of marble white,
And giant fanes, dome over dome
Piled, and triumphant gates, all bright
With workmanship, which could not
come

From touch of mortal instrument,
Shot o'er the vales, or lustre lent
From its own shapes magnificent.

But still the Lady heard that clang
Filling the wide air far away;
And still the mist whose light did hang
Among the mountains shook away,
So that the Lady's heart beat fast,
As half in joy, and half aghast,
On those high domes her look she cast.

MARIANNE'S DREAM

Sudden, from out that city sprung
A light that made the earth grow red;
Two flames that each with quivering
tongue

Licked its high domes, and overhead
Among those mighty towers and fanes
Dropped fire, as a volcano rains
Its sulphurous ruin on the plains.

And hark! a rush as if the deep
Had burst its bonds; she looked behind
The Earth over the western steep
To see the flood descend, and wind
And veiled her eyes; she felt no fear,
The sound as of a drum. 'Tis clear
And looked abroad if she frown, and she
Was it aught else, or but the sea.
Of the blood in her own veins

As came
There was a mist in the sun, and she
Which shook as it were warring flame
quake's shock, tumultuously,
But the very weeds that blow
Were moveless, and ear to and fro.
Stood on its basis steady
The Anchor was seen, and every dome,
But piled around did widely shed
In lines of the flood's suspended foam,
Stood many smoke which hung its night
Among the wined cope of heaven's light.

MARIANNE'S DREAM

The plank whereon that Lady sate
Was driven through the chasms, about
and about,
Between the peaks so desolate
Of the drowning mountains, in and out,
As the thistle-beard on a whirlwind sails—
While the flood was filling those hollow
vales.

At last her plank an eddy crost,
And bore her to the city's wall,
Which now the flood had reached almost;
It might the stoutest heart appal
To hear the fire roar and hiss
Through the domes of those mighty
palaces.

The eddy whirled her round and round
Before a gorgeous gate, which stood
Piercing the clouds of smoke which bound
Its æry arch with light like blood;
She looked on that gate of marble clear,
With wonder that extinguished fear.

For it was filled with sculptures rarest,
Of forms most beautiful and strange,
Like nothing human, but the fairest
Of winged shapes, whose legions range
Throughout the sleep of those that are,
Like this same Lady, good and fair.

MARIANNE'S DREAM

And as she looked, still lovelier grew
Those marble forms;—the sculptor sure
Was a strong spirit, and the hue
Of his own mind did there endure
After the touch, whose power had braided
Such grace, was in some sad change faded.

She looked, the flames were dim, the flood
Grew tranquil as a woodland river
Winding through hills in solitude;
Those marble shapes then seemed to
quiver,
And their fair limbs to float *in motion*,
Like weeds unfolding in the ocean.

And their lips moved; one seemed to speak,
When suddenly the mountain crackt,
And through the chasm the flood did break
In an earth-uplifting cataract:
With cries gave a joyous scream,
The statues wings the pale thin dream
And on the Lady from the stream.
Lifted

The dizzy flight of that phantom pale
Waked the fair Lady from her sleep,
And she arose, while from the veil
Of her dark eyes the dream did creep,
And she walked about as one who knew
That sleep has sights as clear and true
As any waking eyes can view.

Hymn to Intellectual Beauty

The awful shadow of some unseen Power
Floats tho' unseen amongst us,—visit-
ing

This various world with as inconstant
wing

As summer winds that creep from flower
to flower,—

Like moonbeams that behind some piny
mountain shower,

It visits with inconstant glance

Each human heart and countenance;

Like hues and harmonies of evening,—

Like clouds in starlight widely
spread,—

Like memory of music fled,—

Like aught that for its grace may be
Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery.

Spirit of BEAUTY, that dost consecrate

With thine own hues all thou dost
shine upon

Of human thought or form,—where art
thou gone?

HYMN TO

Why dost thou pass away and leave our
state,
This dim vast vale of tears, vacant and
desolate?

Ask why the sunlight not for ever
Weaves rainbows o'er yon mountain
river,

Why aught should fail and fade that once
is shown,

Why fear and dream and death and
birth

Cast on the daylight of this earth
Such gloom,—why man has such a
scope

For love and hate, despondency and hope?

No voice from some sublimer world hath
ever

To sage or poet these responses given—
Therefore the names of Demon, Ghost,
and Heaven,

Remain the records of their vain endea-
vour,

Frail spells—whose uttered charm might
not avail to sever,

From all we hear and all we see,
Doubt, chance, and mutability.

Thy light alone—like mist o'er mountains
driven,

INTELLECTUAL BEAUTY

Or music by the night wind sent,
Thro' strings of some still instrument,

Or moonlight on a midnight stream,
Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet dream.

Love, Hope, and Self-esteem, like clouds
depart

And come, for some uncertain moments
lent.

Man were immortal, and omnipotent,
Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art,
Keep with thy glorious train firm state
within his heart.

Thou messenger of sympathies,
That wax and wane in lovers' eyes—
Thou—that to human thought art nourishment,

Like darkness to a dying flame!
Depart not as thy shadow came,
Depart not—lest the grave should be,
Like life and fear, a dark reality.

While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and
sped

Thro' many a listening chamber, cave
and ruin,

And starlight wood, with fearful steps
pursuing

HYMN TO

Hopes of high talk with the departed
dead.

I called on poisonous names with which
our youth is fed ;

I was not heard—I saw them not—
When musing deeply on the lot
Of life, at the sweet time when winds
are wooing

All vital things that wake to bring
News of birds and blossoming,—
Sudden, thy shadow fell on me ;
I shrieked, and clasped my hands in
ecstasy!

I vowed that I would dedicate my powers
To thee and thine—have I not kept the
vow?

With beating heart and streaming eyes,
even now

I call the phantoms of a thousand hours
Each from his voiceless grave: they have
in visioned bowers

Of studious zeal or love's delight
Outwatched with me the envious
night—

They know that never joy illumed my
brow

Unlinked with hope that thou wouldst
free

This world from its dark slavery,

INTELLECTUAL BEAUTY

That thou—O awful LOVELINESS,
Wouldst give whate'er these words cannot
express.

The day becomes more solemn and serene
When noon is past—there is a har-
mony

In autumn, and a lustre in its sky,
Which thro' the summer is nor heard or
seen,

As if it could not be, as if it had not
been!

Thus let thy power, which like the
truth

Of nature on my passive youth
Descended, to my onward life supply
Its calm—to one who worships thee,
And every form containing thee,
Whom, SPIRIT fair, thy spells did
bind

To fear himself, and love all human kind.

To Misery

Come, be happy!—sit near me,
Shadow-vested Misery:
Coy, unwilling, silent bride,
Mourning in thy robe of pride,
Desolation—deified!

Come, be happy!—sit near me:
Sad as I may seem to thee,
I am happier far than thou,
Lady, whose imperial brow
Is endiademed with woe.

Misery! we have known each other,
Like a sister and a brother
Living in the same lone home,
Many years—we must live some
Hours or ages yet to come.

'T is an evil lot, and yet
Let us make the best of it;
If love can live when pleasure dies,
We two will love, till in our eyes
This heart's Hell seem Paradise.

TO MISERY

Come, be happy!—lie thee down
On the fresh grass newly mown,
Where the Grasshopper doth sing
Merrily—one joyous thing
In a world of sorrowing!

There our tent shall be the willow,
And thine arm shall be my pillow;
Sounds and odours sorrowful
Because they once were sweet, shall lull
Us to slumber, deep and dull.

Ha! thy frozen pulses flutter
With a love thou darest not utter.
Thou art murmuring—thou art weeping—
Is thine icy bosom leaping
While my burning heart lies sleeping?

Kiss me;—oh! thy lips are cold:
Round my neck thine arms enfold—
They are soft, but chill and dead;
And thy tears upon my head
Burn like points of frozen lead.

Hasten to the bridal bed—
Underneath the grave 't is spread:
In darkness may our love be hid,
Oblivion be our coverlid—
We may rest, and none forbid.

TO MISERY

Clasp me till our hearts be grown
Like two shadows into one;
Till this dreadful transport may
Like a vapour fade away,
In the sleep that lasts alway.

We may dream, in that long sleep,
That we are not those who weep;
E'en as Pleasure dreams of thee,
Life-deserting Misery,
Thou mayst dream of her with me.

Let us laugh, and make our mirth,
At the shadows of the earth,
As dogs bay the moonlight clouds,
Which, like spectres wrapt in shrouds,
Pass o'er night in multitudes.

All the wide world, beside us
Show like multitudinous
Puppets passing from a scene;
What but mockery can they mean,
Where I am—where thou hast been?

Stanzas

WRITTEN IN DEJECTION,
NEAR NAPLES

The sun is warm, the sky is clear,
The waves are dancing fast and
bright,
Blue isles and snowy mountains wear
The purple noon's transparent might,
The breath of the moist earth is light,
Around its unexpanded buds;
Like many a voice of one delight,
The winds, the birds, the ocean floods,
The City's voice itself is soft like Soli-
tude's.

I see the Deep's untrampled floor
With green and purple seaweeds
strown;
I see the waves upon the shore,
Like light dissolved in star-showers,
thrown:
I sit upon the sands alone,
The lightning of the noontide ocean
Is flashing round me, and a tone
Arises from its measured motion;
How sweet! did any heart now share in
my emotion.

Adonais

AN ELEGY ON
THE DEATH OF
JOHN KEATS

I weep for Adonais—he is dead!
Oh weep for Adonais! though our tears
Thaw not the frost which binds so dear
a head!
And thou, sad Hour, selected from all
years
To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure
compeers,
And teach them thine own sorrow!
Say: "With me
Died Adonais; till the Future dares
Forget the Past, his fate and fame
shall be
An echo and a light unto eternity!"

Where wert thou, mighty Mother, when
he lay,
When thy Son lay, pierced by the shaft
which flies
In darkness? where was lorn Urania
When Adonais died? With veiled eyes,
'Mid listening Echoes, in her Paradise

ADONAIS

She sate, while one, with soft en-
 amoured breath,
 Rekindled all the fading melodies,
 With which, like flowers that mock the
 corpse beneath,
 He had adorned and hid the coming bulk
 of death.

Oh weep for Adonaïs—he is dead!
 Wake, melancholy Mother, wake and
 weep!
 Yet wherefore? Quench within their
 burning beds
 Thy fiery tears, and let thy loud heart
 keep
 Like his, a mute and uncomplaining
 sleep;
 For he is gone, where all things wise
 and fair
 Descend;—oh, dream not that the
 an-
 norous Deep
 Will yet restore him to the vital air;
 Death feeds on his mute voice, and
 laughs at our despair.

Most musical of mourners, weep again!
 Lament anew, Urania!—He died,
 Who was the Sire of an immortal
 train,

ADONAI'S

Blind, old, and lonely, when his coun-
 try's pride,
 The priest, the slave, and the liberti-
 cide,
 Trampled and mocked with many a
 loathed rite
 Of lust and blood; he went, untermi-
 nated,
 Into the gulf of death; but his clear
 Sprite
 Yet reigns o'er earth; the third among
 the sons of light.

Most musical of mourners, weep anew!
 Not all to that bright station dared to
 climb;
 And happier they their whappiness who
 knew,
 Whose tapers yet burn through that
 night of time
 In which suns perished; others more
 sublime,
 Struck by the envious wrath of man or
 god,
 Have sunk, extinct in their refulgent
 prime;
 And some yet live, treading the thorny
 road,
 Which leads, through toil and heat, to
 Fame's serene abode.

ADONAIS

But now, thy youngest, dearest one has
perished,
The nursling of thy widowhood, who
grew,
Like a pale flower by some sad maiden
cherished,
And fed with true love tears, instead of
dew;
Most musical of mourners, weep anew!
Thy extreme hope, the loveliest and the
last,
The bloom, whose petals, nipt before
they blew,
Died on the promise of the fruit, is
waste;
The broken lily lies—the storm is over-
past.

To that high Capital, where kingly
Death

Keeps his pale court in beauty and
decay,

He came; and bought, with price of
purest breath,

A grave among the eternal. — Come
away!

Haste, while the vault of blue Italian
day

Is yet his fitting charnel-roof! while
still

ADONAI'S

He lies, as if in dewy sleep he lay;
Awake him not! surely he takes his fill
Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all
ill.

He will awake no more, oh, never
more!—
Within the twilight chamber spreads
apace
The shadow of white Death, and at
the door
Invisible Corruption waits to trace
His extreme way to her dim dwelling-
place;
The eternal Hunger sits, but pity and
awe
Soothe her pale rage, nor dares she to
deface
So fair a prey, till darkness, and the law
Of change shall o'er his sleep the mortal
curtain draw.

Oh weep for Adonais!—The quick
Dreams,
The passion-wingèd Ministers of
thought,
Who were his flocks, whom near the
living streams
Of his young spirit he fed, and whom
he taught

ADONAIS

The love which was its music, wander
not,—
Wander no more, from kindling brain
to brain,
But droop there, whence they sprung;
and mourn their lot
Round the cold heart, where, after their
sweet pain,
They ne'er will gather strength, or find
a home again.

And one with trembling hands clasps
his cold head,
And fans him with her moonlight
wings, and cries;
“Our love, our hope, our sorrow, is
not dead;
See, on the silken fringe of his faint
eyes,
Like dew upon a sleeping flower, there
lies
A tear some Dream has loosened from
his brain.”
Lost Angel of a ruined Paradise!
She knew not 'twas her own; as with
no stain
She faded, like a cloud which had out-
wept its rain.

ADONAI'S

One from a lucid urn of starry dew
Washed his light limbs as if embalm-
ing them;
Another clipt her profuse locks, and
threw
The wreath upon him, like an anadem,
Which frozen tears instead of pearls
begem;
Another in her wilful grief would break
Her bow and wingèd reeds, as if to stem
A greater loss with one which was
more weak;
And dull the barbed fire against his
frozen cheek.

Another Splendour on his mouth alit,
That mouth, whence it was wont to
draw the breath
Which gave it strength to pierce the
guarded wit,
And pass into the panting heart be-
neath
With lightning and with music: the
damp death
Quenched its caress upon his icy lips;
And, as a dying meteor stains a wreath
Of moonlight vapour, which the cold
night clips,
It flushed through his pale limbs, and
past to its eclipse.

ADONAI'S

And others came . . . Desires and Adora-
tions,
Winged Persuasions and veiled Des-
tinies,
Splendours, and Glooms, and glimmer-
ing Incarnations
Of hopes and fears, and twilight Phan-
tasies;
And Sorrow, with her family of Sighs,
And Pleasure, blind with tears, led by
the gleam
Of her own dying smile instead of
eyes,
Came in slow pomp;—the moving pomp
might seem
Like pageantry of mist on an autumnal
stream.

All he had loved, and moulded into
thought,
From shape, and hue, and odour, and
sweet sound,
Lamented Adonais. Morning sought
Her eastern watchtower, and her hair
unbound,
Wet with the tears which should adorn
the ground,
Dimmed the ærial eyes that kindle
day;

ADONAI'S

Afar the melancholy thunder moaned,
Pale Ocean in unquiet slumber lay,
And the wild winds flew round, sobbing
in their dismay.

Lost Echo sits amid the voiceless
mountains,
And feeds her grief with his remem-
bered lay,
And will no more reply to winds or
fountains,
Or amorous birds perched on the young
green spray,
Or herdsman's horn, or bell at closing
day;
Since she can mimic not his lips, more
dear
Than those for whose disdain she pined
away
Into a shadow of all sounds:—a drear
Murmur, between their songs, is all the
woodmen hear.

Grief made the young Spring wild, and
she threw down
Her kindling buds, as if she Autumn were,
Or they dead leaves; since her delight
is flown
For whom should she have waked the
sullen year?

ADONAI'S

To Phœbus was not Hyacinth so dear
Nor to himself Narcissus, as to both
Thou Adonais: wan they stand and sere
Amid the faint companions of their
youth,
With dew all turned to tears; odour, to
sighing ruth.

Thy spirit's sister, the lorn nightingale,
Mourns not her mate with such melo-
dious pain;
Not so the eagle, who like thee could
scale
Heaven, and could nourish in the sun's
domain
Her mighty youth with morning, doth
complain,
Soaring and screaming round her empty
nest,
As Albion wails for thee: the curse of
Cain
Light on his head who pierced thy in-
nocent breast,
And scared the angel soul that was its
earthly guest!

Ah woe is me! Winter is come and
gone,
But grief returns with the revolving
year;

ADONAI'S

The airs and streams renew their joyous
tone;
The ants, the bees, the swallows re-
appear;
Fresh leaves and flowers deck the dead
Seasons' bier;
The amorous birds now pair in every
brake,
And build their mossy homes in field
and brere;
And the green lizard, and the golden
snake,
Like unimprisoned flames, out of their
trance awake.

Through wood and stream and field and
hill and Ocean
A quickening life from the Earth's heart
has burst
As it has ever done, with change and
motion,
From the great morning of the world
when first
God dawned on Chaos; in its stream
immersed
The lamps of Heaven flash with a softer
light;
All baser things pant with life's sacred
thirst;

ADONAIS

Diffuse themselves; and spend in love's
delight,
The beauty and the joy of their renewed
might.

The leprous corpse touched by this spirit
tender
Exhales itself in flowers of gentle breath;
Like incarnations of the stars, when
splendour
Is changed to fragrance, they illumine
death,
And mock the merry worm that wakes
beneath
Nought, we know, dies. Shall that
alone which knows
Be as a word consumed before the
sheath
By sight? lightning? — th' intense
atom, always
A moment, and is quenched in a most
cold repose.

no
Alas! that all we loved of him should
be,

But for our grief, as if it had not been,
And grief itself be mortal! Woe is me!
Whence are we, and why are we? of
what scene

ADONAI'S

The actors or spectators? Great and
mean
Meet massed in death, who lends what
life must borrow.
As long as skies are blue, and fields
are green,
Evening must usher night, night urge
the morrow,
Month follow month with woe, and year
wake year to sorrow.

He will awake no more, oh, never
more!
"Wake thou," cried Misery, "childless
Mother, rise
Out of thy sleep, and wake, in thy
heart's core,
A wound more fierce than is with tears
and sighs."
And all the Dreams that watched
Urania's eyes,
And all the Echoes who of their sister's
song
Had held in holy silence, cried: "Arise!"
Swift as a Thought by the snake
Memory stung,
From her ambrosial rest the fading Spirit
dour sprung.

ADONAI'S

She rose like an autumnal Night, that
springs
Out of the East, and follows wild and
drear
The golden Day, which, on eternal
wings,
Even as a ghost abandoning a bier,
Had left the Earth a corpse. Sorrow
and fear
So struck, so roused, so rapt Urania;
So saddened round her like an atmos-
phere
Of stormy mist; so swept her on her way
Even to the mournful place where Adonais
lay.

Out of her secret Paradise she sped,
Through camps and cities rough with
stone, and steel,
And human hearts, which to her airy
tread
Yielding not, wounded the invisible
Palms of her tender feet where'er they
fell:
And barbed tongues, and thoughts more
sharp than they
Rent the soft Form they never could
repel,

ADONAI'S

Whose sacred blood, like the young
tears of May,
Paved with eternal flowers that undeserv-
ing way.

In the death chamber for a moment
Death

Shamed by the presence of that living
Might

Blushed to annihilation, and the breath
Revisited those lips, and life's pale light
Flashed through those limbs, so late
her dear delight.

"Leave me not wild and drear and
comfortless

As silent lightning leaves the starless
night!

Leave me not!" cried Urania: her dis-
tress

Roused Death: Death rose and smiled,
and met her vain caress.

"Stay yet awhile! speak to me once
again;

Kiss me, so long but as a kiss may live;
And in my heartless breast and burn-
ing brain

That word, that kiss shall all thoughts
else survive,

With food of saddest memory kept alive,

ADONAI'S

Now thou art dead, as if it were a
part
Of thee, my Adonais! I would give
All that I am to be as thou now art!
But I am chained to Time, and cannot
thence depart!

"O gentle child, beautiful as thou wert,
Why didst thou leave the trodden paths
of men
Too soon, and with weak hands though
mighty heart
Dare the unpastured dragon in his den?
Defenceless as thou wert, oh where was
then
Wisdom the mirrored shield, or scorn
the spear?
Or hadst thou waited the full cycle,
when
Thy spirit should have filled its crescent
sphere,
The monsters of life's waste had fled from
thee like deer.

"The herded wolves, bold only to pursue;
The obscene ravens, clamorous o'er the dead;
The vultures to the conqueror's banner
true

ADONAI'S

Who feed where Desolation first has
fed,
And whose wings rain contagion;—
how they fled,
When like Apollo, from his golden bow,
The Pythian of the age one arrow sped
And smiled!—the spoilers tempt no
second blow,
They fawn on the proud feet that spurn
them lying low.

“The sun comes forth, and many rep-
tiles spawn;
He sets, and each ephemeral insect then
Is gathered into death without a dawn,
And the immortal stars awake again;
So is it in the world of living men:
A godlike mind soars forth, in its de-
light
Making earth bare and veiling heaven,
and when
It sinks, the swarms that dimmed or
shared its light
Leave to its kindred lamps the spirit's
awful night.”

Thus ceased she: and the mountain
shepherds came,
Their garlands sere, their magic mantles
rent;

ADONAIS

The Pilgrim of Eternity,¹ whose fame
Over his living head like Heaven is
bent,
An early but enduring monument,
Came, veiling all the lightnings of his
song
In sorrow; from her wilds Ierne sent
The sweetest lyrist² of her saddest
wrong,
And love taught grief to fall like music
from his tongue.

Midst others of less note, came one frail
Form,³
A phantom among men; companionless
As the last cloud of an expiring storm
Whose thunder is its knell; he, as I
guess,
Had gazed on Nature's naked loveli-
ness,
Actæon-like, and now he fled astray
With feeble steps o'er the world's wilder-
ness,
And his own thoughts, along that rug-
ged way,
Pursued, like raging hounds, their father
and their prey.

¹ Byron.

² Moore.

³ Shelley himself.

ADONAIS

A pardlike Spirit beautiful and swift—
A Love in desolation masked;—a Power
Girt round with weakness;—it can scarce
 uplift
The weight of the superincumbent hour;
It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,
A breaking billow;—even whilst we
 speak
Is it not broken? on the withering flower
The killing sun smiles brightly: on a
 cheek
The life can burn in blood, even while
 the heart may break.

His head was bound with pansies over-
 blown,
And faded violets, white, and pied, and
 blue;
And a light spear topped with a cypress
 cone,
Round whose rude shaft dark ivy tresses
 grew
Yet dripping with the forest's noonday
 dew,
Vibrated, as the ever-beating heart
Shook the weak hand that grasped it;
 of that crew
He came the last, neglected and apart;
A herd-abandoned deer struck by the
 hunter's dart.

ADONAIS

All stood aloof, and at his partial moan
Smiled through their tears; well knew
that gentle band
Who in another's fate now wept his
own;
As in the accents of an unknown land,
He sung new sorrow; sad Urania
scanned
The Stranger's mien, and murmured:
"Who art thou?"
He answered not, but with a sudden
hand
Made bare his branded and ensanguined
brow,
Which was like Cain's or Christ's—oh,
that it should be so!

What softer voice is hushed over the
dead?

Athwart what brow is that dark mantle
thrown?

What form leans sadly o'er the white
deathbed,

In mockery of monumental stone,
The heavy heart heaving without a moan?

If it be He,¹ who, gentlest of the wise,
Taught, soothed, loved, honoured the
departed one;

¹ Probably Charles Cowden Clarke. Some think Leigh Hunt.

ADONAI^S

Let me not vex, with inharmonious
sighs
The silence of that heart's accepted sacri-
fice.

Our Adonais has drunk poison—oh!
What deaf and viperous murderer could
crown
Life's early cup with such a draught of
woe?
The nameless worm would now itself
disown:
It felt, yet could escape the magic tone
Whose prelude held all envy; hate, and
wrong,
But what was howling in one breast
alone,
Silent with expectation of the song,
Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver
lyre unstrung.

Live thou,¹ whose infamy is not thy
fame!
Live! fear no heavier chastisement from
me,
Thou noteless blot on a remembered
name!

¹ Gifford, or whoever else was the critic of the *Quarterly Review*.

ADONAIS

But be thyself, and know thyself to be!
And ever at thy season be thou free
To spill the venom when thy fangs
o'erflow:
Remorse and Self-contempt shall cling
to thee;
Hot Shame shall burn upon thy secret
brow,
And like a beaten hound tremble thou
shalt—as now.

Nor let us weep that our delight is
fled
Far from these carrion kites that scream
below;
He wakes or sleeps with the enduring
dead;
Thou canst not soar where he is sitting
now.—
Dust to the dust! but the pure spirit
shall flow
Back to the burning fountain whence
it came,
A portion of the Eternal, which must
glow
Through time and change, unquench-
ably the same,
Whilst thy cold embers choke the sordid
hearth of shame.

ADONAIS

Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth
not sleep—
He hath awakened from the dream of
life—
'Tis we, who lost in stormy visions,
keep
With phantoms an unprofitable strife,
And in mad trance, strike with our
spirit's knife
Invulnerable nothings.— *We* decay
Like corpses in a charnel; fear and
grief
Convulse us and consume us day by
day,
And cold hopes swarm like worms within
our living clay.

He has outsoared the shadow of our
night;
Envy and calumny and hate and pain,
And that unrest which men miscall
delight,
Can touch him not and torture not
again;
From the contagion of the world's slow
stain
He is secure, and now can never mourn
A heart grown cold, a head grown
gray in vain;

ADONAI'S

Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased
to burn,
With sparkless ashes load an unlamented
urn.

He lives, he wakes—'t is Death is dead,
not he;
Mourn not for Adonais.—Thou young
Dawn
Turn all thy dew to splendour, for from
thee
The spirit thou lamentest is not gone;
Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to
moan!
Cease ye faint flowers and fountains,
and thou Air
Which like a mourning veil thy scarf
hadst thrown
O'er the abandoned Earth, now leave
it bare .
Even to the joyous stars which smile on
its despair!

He is made one with Nature: there is
heard
His voice in all her music, from the
moan
Of thunder to the song of night's sweet
bird;
He is a presence to be felt and known

ADONAIS

In darkness and in light, from herb
and stone,
Spreading itself where'er that Power
may move
Which has withdrawn his being to its
own;
Which wields the world with never
wearied love,
Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it
above.

He is a portion of the loveliness
Which once he made more lovely: he
doth bear
His part, while the one Spirit's plastic
stress
Sweeps through the dull dense world,
compelling there
All new successions to the forms they
wear;
Torturing th' unwilling dross that
checks its flight
To its own likeness, as each mass may
bear;
And bursting in its beauty and its might
From trees and beasts and men into the
Heaven's light.

The splendours of the firmament of time
May be eclipsed, but are extinguished not;

ADONAIS

Like stars to their appointed height
they climb
And death is a low mist which cannot
blot
The brightness it may veil. When lofty
thought
Lifts a young heart above its mortal
lair,
And love and life contend in it, for
what
Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live
there
And move like winds of light on dark
and stormy air.

The inheritors of unfulfilled renown
Rose from their thrones, built beyond
mortal thought,
Far in the Unapparent. Chatterton
Rose pale, his solemn agony had not
Yet faded from him; Sidney, as he
fought
And as he fell and as he lived and
loved
Sublimely mild, a Spirit without spot,
Arose; and Lucan, by his death ap-
proved:
Oblivion as they rose shrank like a thing
reproved.

ADONAIS

And many more, whose names on Earth
are dark
But whose transmitted effluence cannot
die
So long as fire outlives the parent
spark,
Rose, robed in dazzling immortality.
"Thou art become as one of us," they
cry,
"It was for thee yon kingless sphere
has long
Swung blind in unascended majesty,
Silent alone amid an Heaven of Song.
Assume thy wingèd throne, thou Vesper
of our throng!"

Who mourns for Adonais? Oh come
forth
Fond wretch! and know thyself and him
aright.
Clasp with thy panting soul the pendu-
lous Earth;
As from a centre, dart thy spirit's light
Beyond all worlds, until its spacious
might
Sate the void circumference: then
shrink
Even to a point within our day and
night;

ADONAIS

And keep thy heart light lest it make
thee sink
When hope has kindled hope, and lured
thee to the brink.

Or go to Rome, which is the sepulchre
Oh! not of him, but of our joy: 'tis
nought
That ages, empires, and religions there
Lie buried in the ravage they have
wrought;
For such as he can lend,—they borrow
not
Glory from those who made the world
their prey;
And he is gathered to the kings of
thought
Who waged contention with their time's
decay,
And of the past are all that cannot pass
away.

Go thou to Rome,—at once the Para-
dise,
The grave, the city, and the wilderness;
And where its wrecks like shattered
mountains rise,
And flowering weeds, and fragrant
copses dress
The bones of Desolation's nakedness

ADONAIS

Pass, till the Spirit of the spot shall
 lead
Thy footsteps to a slope of green access
Where, like an infant's smile, over the
 dead
A light of laughing flowers along the
 grass is spread.

And gray walls moulder round, on
 which dull Time
Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary
 brand;
And one keen pyramid with wedge
 sublime,
Pavilioning the dust of him who
 planned
This refuge for his memory, doth stand
Like flame transformed to marble; and
 beneath,
A field is spread, on which a newer
 band
Have pitched in Heaven's smile their
 camp of death
Welcoming him we lose with scarce ex-
 tinguished breath.

Here pause: these graves are all too
 young as yet
To have outgrown the sorrow which
 consigned

ADONAIS

Its charge to each; and if the seal
is set,
Here, on one fountain of a mourning
mind,
Break it not thou! too surely shalt thou
find
Thine own well full, if thou returnest
home,
Of tears and gall. From the world's
bitter wind
Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb.
What Adonais is, why fear we to become?

The One remains, the many change
and pass;
Heaven's light for ever shines, Earth's
shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-coloured
glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments.
—Die,
If thou wouldst be with that which
thou dost seek!
Follow where all is fled!—Rome's azure
sky,
Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words,
are weak
The glory they transfuse with fitting truth
to speak.

ADONAIS

Why linger, why turn back, why shrink,
my Heart?

Thy hopes are gone before: from all
things here

They have departed; thou shouldst now
depart!

A light is past from the revolving year,
And man, and woman; and what still
is dear

Attracts to crush, repels to make thee
wither.

The soft sky smiles,—the low wind
whispers near;

'Tis Adonais calls! oh, hasten thither,

* No more let Life divide what Death can
join together.

That Light whose smile kindles the
Universe,

That Beauty in which all things work
and move,

That Benediction which the eclipsing
Curse

Of birth can quench not, that sustaining
Love

Which through the web of being
blindly wove

By man and beast and earth and air
and sea,

ADONAI'S

Burns bright or dim, as each are
mirrors of
The fire for which all thirst, now
beams on me,
Consuming the last clouds of cold mor-
tality.

The breath whose might I have invoked
in song
Descends on me; my spirit's bark is
driven,
Far from the shore, far from the
trembling throng
Whose sails were never to the tempest
given;
The massy earth and spherèd skies are
riven!
I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar;
Whilst burning through the inmost veil
of Heaven,
The soul of Adonais, like a star,
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal
are.

Song

FROM CHARLES
THE FIRST

Heigho! the lark and the owl!
One flies the morning, and one lulls
the night:—
Only the nightingale, poor fond soul,
Sings like the fool through darkness
and light.

“A widow bird sate mourning for her
love
Upon a wintry bough;
The frozen wind crept on above,
The freezing stream below.

“There was no leaf upon the forest bare,
No flower upon the ground,
And little motion in the air
Except the mill-wheel's sound.”

Stanzas

APRIL, 1824

Away! the moor is dark beneath
moon, shed;
Rapid clouds have drank the labour;
beam of even: I
Away! the gathering winds will know
darkness soon, ne
And profoundest midnight shroud
serene lights of heaven.

Pause not! The time is past! age
voice cries, Away! e
Tempt not with one last sigh
friend's ungentle mood:
Thy lover's eye, so glazed and cold
not entreat thy stay:
Duty and dereliction guide thee dead,
solitude. I be,
arded,
Away, away! to thy sad and silent
Pour bitter tears on its cold wake
hearth; wake.

STANZAS

Watch the dim shades as like ghosts
they go and come,
Sord and complicate strange webs of melan-
choly mirth.

FROM CAVES OF WASTED AUTUMN WOODS SHALL
THE FIRM float around thine head:
blossoms of dewy spring shall gleam
Heighoeneath thy feet:

One y soul or this world must fade in
the frost that binds the dead,
Only thmidnight's frown and morning's
Singsnile, ere'thou and peace may meet.

and shadows of midnight possess
"A wic their own repose,
l the weary winds are silent, or the
Upon moon is in the deep:

The frospite to its turbulence unresting
The fcan knows;
ever moves, or toils, or grieves,
"There with its appointed sleep.

No flic the grave shalt rest—yet till the
And littanatoms flee
Except that house and heath and garden
ade dear to thee erewhile,
embrance, and repentance, and
ep musings are not free
the music of two voices and the
ht of one sweet smile.

To Mary Woll-
stonecraft Godwin

Mine eyes were dim with tears unshed;
Yes, I was firm—thus wert not thou;—
My baffled looks did fear yet dread
To meet thy looks—I could not know
How anxiously they sought to shine
With soothing pity upon mine.

To sit and curb the soul's mute rage
Which preys upon itself alone;
To curse the life which is the cage
Of fettered grief that dares not groan,
Hiding from many a careless eye
The scornèd load of agony.

Whilst thou alone, then not regarded,
The * * * thou alone should be,
To spend years thus, and be rewarded,
As thou, sweet love, requited me
When none were near—Oh! I did wake
From torture for that moment's sake.

TO MARY GODWIN

Upon my heart thy accents sweet
Of peace and pity fell like dew
On flowers half dead;—thy lips did meet
Mine tremblingly; thy dark eyes threw
Their soft persuasion on my brain,
Charming away its dream of pain.

We are not happy, sweet! our state
Is strange and full of doubt and fear;
More need of words that ills abate;—
Reserve or censure come not near
Our sacred friendship, lest there be
No solace left for thee and me.

Gentle and good and mild thou art,
Nor can I live if thou appear
Aught but thyself, or turn thine heart
Away from me, or stoop to wear
The mask of scorn, although it be
To hide the love thou feel'st for me.

Mutability

We are as clouds that veil the midnight
moon;

How restlessly they speed, and gleam,
and quiver,

Streaking the darkness radiantly!—yet
soon

Night closes round, and they are lost
for ever:

Or like forgotten lyres, whose dissonant
strings

Give various response to each varying
blast,

To whose frail frame no second motion
brings

One mood or modulation like the last.

We rest.—A dream has power to poison
sleep;

We rise.—One wandering thought
pollutes the day;

We feel, conceive or reason, laugh or
weep;

Embrace fond woe, or cast our cares
away:

MUTABILITY

It is the same!—For, be it joy or sorrow,
The path of its departure still is free:
Man's yesterday may ne'er be like his
morrow;
Nought may endure but Mutability.

To Wordsworth

Poet of Nature, thou hast wept to know
That things depart which never may re-
turn :

Childhood and youth, friendship and love's
first glow,
Have fled like sweet dreams, leaving thee
to mourn.

These common woes I feel. One loss is
mine

Which thou too feel'st, yet I alone de-
plore.

Thou wert as a lone star, whose light
did shine

On some frail bark in winter's midnight
roar:

Thou hast like to a rock-built refuge
stood

Above the blind and battling multitude:
In honoured poverty thy voice did weave
Songs consecrate to truth and liberty.—

Deserting these, thou leavest me to
grieve,

Thus having been, that thou shouldst
cease to be.



Lines

The cold earth slept below,
Above the cold sky shone;
And all around, with a chilling sound,
From caves of ice and fields of snow,
The breath of night like death did flow
Beneath the sinking moon.

The wintry hedge was black,
The green grass was not seen,
The birds did rest on the bare thorn's
breast,
Whose roots, beside the pathway track,
Had bound their folds o'er many a
crack,
Which the frost had made between.

Thine eyes glowed in the glare
Of the moon's dying light;
As a fenfire's beam on a sluggish stream,
Gleams dimly, so the moon shone
there,
And it yellowed the strings of thy
raven hair,
That shook in the wind of night.

LINES

The moon made thy lips pale, beloved—
The wind made thy bosom chill—
The night did shed on thy dear head
Its frozen dew, and thou didst lie
Where the bitter breath of the naked
sky
Might visit thee at will.

To Constantia,
Singing

Thus to be lost and thus to sink and die,
Perchance were death indeed!—Con-
stantia, turn!

In thy dark eyes a power like light doth
lie,

Even though the sounds which were
thy voice, which burn

Between thy lips, are laid to sleep;

Within thy breath, and on thy hair,
like odour it is yet,

And from thy touch like fire doth leap.

Even while I write, my burning cheeks
are wet.—

Alas, that the torn heart can bleed, but
not forget!

A breathless awe, like the swift change
Unseen, but felt in youthful slumbers,
Wild, sweet, but uncommunicably strange,
Thou breathest now in fast ascending
numbers.

The cope of heaven seems rent and cloven
By the enchantment of thy strain,
And on my shoulders wings are woven,

TO CONSTANTIA, SINGING

To follow its sublime career,
Beyond the mighty moons that wane
Upon the verge of nature's utmost
sphere,
Till the world's shadowy walls are past
and disappear.

Her voice is hovering o'er my soul—it
lingers

O'ershadowing it with soft and lulling
wings,
The blood and life within those snowy
fingers

Teach witchcraft to the instrumental
strings.

My brain is wild, my breath comes
quick—

The blood is listening in my frame,
And thronging shadows, fast and thick
Fall on my overflowing eyes;

My heart is quivering like a flame;
As morning dew, that in the sunbeam
dies,

I am dissolved in these consuming
ecstasies.

I have no life, Constantia, now, but thee,
Whilst, like the world-surrounding air,
thy song

TO CONSTANTIA, SINGING

Flows on, and fills all things with
melody.—

Now is thy voice a tempest swift and
strong,

On which, like one in trance upborne,
Secure o'er rocks and waves I sweep,
Rejoicing like a cloud of morn.

Now 'tis the breath of summer night,
Which when the starry waters sleep,
Round western isles, with incense-
blossoms bright,
Lingering, suspends my soul in its
voluptuous flight.

On Fanny
Godwin

Her voice did quiver as we parted,
Yet knew I not that heart was broken
From which it came, and I departed
Heeding not the words then spoken.
Misery—O Misery,
This world is all too wide for thee.

Lines

That time is dead for ever, child,
Drowned, frozen, dead for ever!
 We look on the past
 And stare aghast
At the spectres wailing, pale and ghast,
Of hopes which thou and I beguiled
 To death on life's dark river.

The stream we gazed on then, rolled by;
Its waves are unreturning;
 But we yet stand
 In a lone land,
Like tombs to mark the memory
Of hopes and fears, which fade and flee
In the light of life's dim morning.

Death

They die—the dead return not—Misery
Sits near an open grave and calls them
over,
A Youth with hoary hair and haggard
eye—
They are the names of kindred, friend
and lover,
Which he so feebly calls—they all are
gone!
Fond wretch, all dead, those vacant names
alone,
This most familiar scene, my pain—
These tombs alone remain.

Misery, my sweetest friend—oh! weep no
more!
Thou wilt not be consoled—I wonder
not!
For I have seen thee from thy dwelling's
door
Watch the calm sunset with them, and
this spot

DEATH

Was even as bright and calm, but transitory,
And now thy hopes are gone, thy hair is hoary;
This most familiar scene, my pain—
These tombs alone remain.

Ozymandias

I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs
of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the
sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose
frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold com-
mand,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions
read
Which yet survive, stamped on these life-
less things,
The hand that mocked them and the
heart that fed:
And on the pedestal these words appear:
"My name is Ozymandias, king of
kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and
despair!"
Nothing beside remains. Round the de-
cay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and
bare
The lone and level sands stretch far
away.

Arethusa

Arethusa arose
From her couch of snows
In the Acroceraunian mountains,—
From cloud and from crag,
With many a jag,
Shepherding her bright fountains.
She leapt down the rocks,
With her rainbow locks
Streaming among the streams;—
Her steps paved with green
The downward ravine
Which slopes to the western gleams:
And gliding and springing
She went, ever singing,
In murmurs as soft as sleep;
The Earth seemed to love her,
And Heaven smiled above her,
As she lingered towards the deep.

Then Alpheus bold,
On his glacier cold,
With his trident the mountains strook
And opened a chasm
In the rocks;—with the spasm
All Erymanthus shook.
And the black south wind
It concealed behind

ARETHUSA

The urns of the silent snow,
And earthquake and thunder
Did rend in sunder
The bars of the springs below.
The beard and the hair
Of the River-god were
Seen through the torrent's sweep,
As he followed the light
Of the fleet nymph's flight
To the brink of the Dorian deep.

“Oh, save me! Oh, guide me!
And bid the deep hide me,
For he grasps me now by the hair!”
The loud Ocean heard,
To its blue depth stirred,
And divided at her prayer;
And under the water
The Earth's white daughter
Fled like a sunny beam;
Behind her descended
Her billows, unblended
With the brackish Dorian stream:—
Like a gloomy stain
On the emerald main
Alpheus rushed behind,—
As an eagle pursuing
A dove to its ruin
Down the streams of the cloudy wind.

ARETHUSA

Under the powers
Where the Ocean Powers
Sit on their pearlèd thrones,
Through the coral woods
Of the weltering floods,
Over heaps of unvalued stones;
Through the dim beams
Which amid the streams
Weave a net-work of coloured light;
And under the caves,
Where the shadowy waves
Are as green as the forest's night:—
Outspeeding the shark,
And the sword-fish dark,
Under the ocean foam,
And up through the rifts
Of the mountain cliffs
They past to their Dorian home.

And now from their fountains
In Enna's mountains,
Down one vale where the morning
basks,
Like friends once parted
Grown single-hearted,
They ply their watery tasks.
At sunrise they leap
From their cradles steep
In the cave of the shelving hill;

ARETHUSA

At noontide they flow
Through the woods below
And the meadows of asphodel;
And at night they sleep
In the rocking deep
Beneath the Ortygian shore;—
Like spirits that lie
In the azure sky
When they love but live no more.

Song of Proserpine

WHILE GATHERING
FLOWERS ON THE
PLAIN OF ENNA

Sacred Goddess, Mother Earth,
Thou from whose immortal bosom,
Gods, and men, and beasts have birth,
Leaf and blade, and bud and blossom,
Breathe thine influence most divine
On thine own child, Proserpine.

If with mists of evening dew
Thou dost nourish these young flowers
Till they grow, in scent and hue,
Fairest children of the hours,
Breathe thine influence most divine
On thine own child, Proserpine.

The Question

I dreamed that, as I wandered by the
way,
Bare winter suddenly was changed to
spring,
And gentle odours led my steps astray,
Mixed with a sound of waters mur-
muring
Along a shelving bank of turf, which lay
Under a copse, and hardly dared to
fling
Its green arms round the bosom of the
stream,
But kissed it and then fled, as thou
mightest in dream.

There grew pied wind-flowers and violets,
Daisies, those pearled Arcturi of the
earth,
The constellated flower that never sets;
Faint oxlips; tender bluebells, at whose
birth
The sod scarce heaved; and that tall
flower that wets—
Like a child, half in tenderness and
mirth—

THE QUESTION

Its mother's face with heaven's collected
tears,
When the low wind, its playmate's voice,
it hears.

And in the warm hedge grew lush eglan-
tine,
Green cowbind and the moonlight-
coloured May,
And cherry-blossoms, and white cups,
whose wine
Was the bright dew, yet drained not
by the day;
And wild roses, and ivy serpentine,
With its dark buds and leaves, wander-
ing astray;
And flowers azure, black, and streaked
with gold,
Fairer than any wakened eyes behold.

And nearer to the river's trembling edge
There grew broad flag-flowers, purple
prankt with white,
And starry river buds among the sedge,
And floating water-lilies, broad and
bright,
Which lit the oak that overhung the
hedge
With moonlight beams of their own
watery light;

THE QUESTION

And bulrushes, and reeds of such deep
green
As soothed the dazzled eye with sober
sheen.

Methought that of these visionary flowers
I made a nosegay, bound in such a
way
That the same hues, which in their
natural bowers
Were mingled or opposed, the like
array
Kept these imprisoned children of the
Hours
Within my hand,—and then, elate and
gay,
I hastened to the spot whence I had
come,
That I might there present it!—Oh! to
whom?

The Two
Spirits:
An Allegory

First Spirit

O thou, who plumed with strong desire
Wouldst float above the earth, beware!
A Shadow tracks thy flight of fire—
Night is coming!
Bright are the regions of the air,
And among the winds and beams
It were delight to wander there—
Night is coming!

Second Spirit

The deathless stars are bright above;
If I would cross the shade of night,
Within my heart is the lamp of love,
And that is day!
And the moon will smile with gentle
light
On my golden plumes where'er they move;
The meteors will linger round my flight,
And make night day.

THE TWO SPIRITS

First Spirit

But if the whirlwinds of darkness waken
Hail, and lightning, and stormy rain;
See, the bounds of the air are shaken—

Night is coming!

The red swift clouds of the hurricane
Yon declining sun have overtaken,
The clash of the hail sweeps over the
plain—

Night is coming!

Second Spirit

I see the light, and I hear the sound;
I'll sail on the flood of the tempest
dark,

With the calm within and the light
around

Which makes night day:

And thou, when the gloom is deep and
stark,

Look from thy dull earth, slumber-bound,
My moon-like flight thou then may'st
mark

On high, far away.

Some say there is a precipice

Where one vast pine is frozen to ruin
O'er piles of snow and chasms of ice

'Mid Alpine mountains;

THE TWO SPIRITS

And that the languid storm pursuing
That wingèd shape, for ever flies
Round those hoar branches, aye re-
newing
Its aëry fountains.

Some say when nights are dry and clear,
And the death-dews sleep on the morass,
Sweet whispers are heard by the traveller,
Which make night day:

And a silver shape like his early love
doth pass
Upborne by her wild and glittering hair,
And when he awakes on the fragrant
grass,

He finds night day.

Autumn:
A Dirge

The warm sun is failing, the bleak wind
is wailing,
The bare boughs are sighing, the pale
flowers are dying,
And the year
On the earth her deathbed, in a shroud
of leaves dead,
Is lying.
Come, months, come away,
From November to May,
In your saddest array;
Follow the bier
Of the dead cold year,
And like dim shadows watch by her
sepulchre.

The chill rain is falling, the nipt worm
is crawling,
The rivers are swelling, the thunder is
knelling
For the year;

AUTUMN: A DIRGE

The blithe swallows are flown, and the
lizards each gone

To his dwelling;

Come, months, come away;

Put on white, black, and gray;

Let your light sisters play—

Ye follow the bier

Of the dead cold year,

And make her grave green with tear on
tear.

The Waning Moon



And like a dying lady, lean and pale,
Who totters forth, wrapt in a gauzy veil,
Out of her chamber, led by the insane
And feeble wanderings of her fading
 brain,
The moon arose up in the murky east,
A white and shapeless mass.

Fragment—
To the Moon

Art thou pale for weariness
Of climbing heaven and gazing on the
earth,
Wandering companionless
Among the stars that have a different
birth,—
And ever changing like a joyless eye
That finds no object worth its constancy?

Thou chosen sister of the spirit,
That gazes on thee till in thee it
pities . . .

Dirge for the Year

Orphan hours, the year is dead,
Come and sigh, come and weep!
Merry hours, smile instead,
For the year is but asleep.
See, it smiles as it is sleeping,
Mocking your untimely weeping.

As an earthquake rocks a corse
In its coffin in the clay,
So White Winter, that rough nurse,
Rocks the death-cold year to-day;
Solemn hours! wail aloud
For your mother in her shroud.

As the wild air stirs and sways
The tree-swung cradle of a child,
So the breath of these rude days
Rocks the year:—be calm and mild;
Trembling hours, she will arise
With new love within her eyes.

January gray is here,
Like a sexton by her grave;
February bears the bier,
March with grief doth howl and rave,
And April weeps—but, O, ye hours,
Follow with May's fairest flowers.

To Night

Swiftly walk over the western wave,
 Spirit of Night!
Out of the misty eastern cave,
Where all the long and lone daylight,
Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear,
Which make thee terrible and dear,—
 Swift be thy flight!

Wrap thy form in a mantle gray,
 Star-inwrought!
Blind with thine hair the eyes of Day;
Kiss her until she be wearied out,
Then wander o'er city, and sea, and land,
Touching all with thine opiate wand—
 Come, long sought!

When I arose and saw the dawn,
 I sighed for thee;
When light rode high, and the dew was
 gone,
And noon lay heavy on flower and tree,
And the weary Day turned to his rest,
Lingering like an unloved guest,
 I sighed for thee.

TO NIGHT

Thy brother Death came, and cried,
 Wouldst thou me?
Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,
Murmured like a noontide bee,
Shall I nestle near thy side?
Wouldst thou me?—And I replied,
 No, not thee!

Death will come when thou art dead,
 Soon, too soon—
Sleep will come when thou art fled;
Of neither would I ask the boon
I ask of thee, beloved Night—
Swift be thine approaching flight,
 Come soon, soon!

To ———

Music, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory—
Odours, when sweet violets sicken,
Live within the sense they quicken.
Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
Are heaped for the beloved's bed;
And so thy thoughts, when thou art
gone,
Love itself shall slumber on.

Song

Rarely, rarely, comest thou,
Spirit of Delight!
Wherefore hast thou left me now
Many a day and night?
Many a weary night and day
'Tis since thou art fled away.

How shall ever one like me
Win thee back again?
With the joyous and the free
Thou wilt scoff at pain.
Spirit false! thou hast forgot
All but those who need thee not.

As a lizard with the shade
Of a trembling leaf,
Thou with sorrow art dismayed;
Even the sighs of grief
Reproach thee that thou art not near,
And reproach thou wilt not hear.

Let me set my mournful ditty
To a merry measure,
Thou wilt never come for pity,
Thou wilt come for pleasure.
Pity then will cut away
Those cruel wings, and thou wilt stay.

SONG

I love all that thou lovest,
Spirit of Delight!
The fresh Earth in new leaves drest,
And the starry night;
Autumn evening, and the morn
When the golden mists are born.

I love snow, and all the forms
Of the radiant frost;
I love waves, and winds, and storms,
Every thing almost
Which is Nature's, and may be
Untainted by man's misery.

I love tranquil solitude,
And such society
As is quiet, wise, and good;
Between thee and me
What difference? but thou dost possess
The things I seek, not love them less.

I love Love—though he has wings,
And like light can flee;
But above all other things,
Spirit, I love thee—
Thou art love and life! Oh come,
Make once more my heart thy home.

A Lament

O world! O life! O time!
On whose last steps I climb
Trembling at that where I had stood
before;
When will return the glory of your prime?
No more—Oh, never more!

Out of the day and night
A joy has taken flight;
Fresh spring, and summer, and winter
hoar,
Move my faint heart with grief, but with
delight
No more—Oh, never more!

To ———

One word is too often profaned
For me to profane it,
One feeling too falsely disdained
For thee to disdain it.
One hope is too like despair
For prudence to smother,
And pity from thee more dear
Than that from another.

I can give not what men call love,
But wilt thou accept not
The worship the heart lifts above
And the Heavens reject not,
The desire of the moth for the star,
Of the night for the morrow,
The devotion to something afar
From the sphere of our sorrow?

Fragment—
Music

I pant for the music which is divine,
My heart in its thirst is a dying flower;
Pour forth the sound like enchanted wine,
Loosen the notes in a silver shower;
Like a herbless plain for the gentle rain,
I gasp, I faint, till they wake again.

Let me drink of the spirit of that sweet
sound,
More, oh more,—I am thirsting yet,
It loosens the serpent which care has
bound
Upon my heart to stifle it;
The dissolving strain, through every vein,
Passes into my heart and brain.

As the scent of a violet withered up,
Which grew by the brink of a silver
lake;
When the hot noon has drained its dewy
cup,
And mist there was none its thirst to
slake—

MUSIC

And the violet lay dead while the odour
flew
On the wings of the wind o'er the waters
blue—

As one who drinks from a charmed cup
Of foaming, and sparkling and mur-
muring wine,
Whom, a mighty Enchantress filling up,
Invites to love with her kiss divine . . .

Lines: "When
the Lamp is
Shattered"

When the lamp is shattered
The light in the dust lies dead—

When the cloud is scattered
The rainbow's glory is shed.

When the lute is broken,
Sweet tones are remembered not;

When the lips have spoken,
Loved accents are soon forgot.

As music and splendour
Survive not the lamp and the lute

The heart's echoes render
No song when the spirit is mute:—

No song but sad dirges,
Like the wind through a ruined cell,

Or the mournful surges
That ring the dead seaman's knell.

When hearts have once mingled
Love first leaves the well-built nest

The weak one is singled
To endure what it once possest.

LINES

O Love! who bewailest
The frailty of all things here,
Why choose you the frailest
For your cradle, your home, and your bier?

Its passions will rock thee
As the storms rock the ravens on high:
Bright reason will mock thee,
Like the sun from a wintry sky.
From thy nest every rafter
Will rot, and thine eagle home
Leave thee naked to laughter,
When leaves fall and cold winds come.

To Jane:
The Invitation

Best and brightest, come away!
Fairer far than this fair Day,
Which, like thee to those in sorrow,
Comes to bid a sweet good-morrow
To the rough Year just awake
In its cradle on the brake.
The brightest hour of unborn Spring,
Through the winter wandering,
Found, it seems, the halcyon Morn
To hoar February born;
Bending from Heaven, in azure mirth,
It kissed the forehead of the Earth,
And smiled upon the silent sea,
And bade the frozen streams be free,
And waked to music all their fountains,
And breathed upon the frozen mountains,
And like a prophetess of May
Strewed flowers upon the barren way,
Making the wintry world appear
Like one on whom thou smilest, Dear.

Away, away, from men and towns,
To the wild wood and the downs—

THE INVITATION

To the silent wilderness
Where the soul need not repress
Its music lest it should not find
An echo in another's mind,
While the touch of Nature's art
Harmonizes heart to heart.
I leave this notice on my door
For each accustomed visitor:—
"I am gone into the fields
To take what this sweet hour yields;
Reflection, you may come to-morrow,
Sit by the fireside with Sorrow.—
You with the unpaid bill, Despair,—
You tiresome verse-reciter, Care,—
I will pay you in the grave,—
Death will listen to your stave.
Expectation too, be off!
To-day is for itself enough;
Hope in pity mock not Woe
With smiles, nor follow where I go;
Long having lived on thy sweet food,
At length I find one moment's good
After long pain—with all your love,
This you never told me of."

Radiant Sister of the Day,
Awake! arise! and come away!
To the wild woods and the plains,
And the pools where winter rains

THE INVITATION

Image all their roof of leaves,
Where the pine its garland weaves
Of sapless green and ivy dun
Round stems that never kiss the sun;
Where the lawns and pastures be,
And the sandhills of the sea;—
Where the melting hoar-frost wets
The daisy-star that never sets,
And wind-flowers, and violets,
Which yet join not scent to hue,
Crown the pale year weak and new;
When the night is left behind
In the deep east, dun and blind,
And the blue noon is over us,
And the multitudinous
Billows murmur at our feet,
Where the earth and ocean meet,
And all things seem only one
In the universal sun.

To Jane:
The Recollection



Now the last day of many days,
All beautiful and bright as thou,
The loveliest and the last, is dead,
Rise, Memory, and write its praise!
Up to thy wonted work! come, trace
The epitaph of glory fled,—
For now the Earth has changed its face,
A frown is on the Heaven's brow.

We wandered to the Pine Forest
That skirts the Ocean's foam,
The lightest wind was in its nest,
The tempest in its home.
The whispering waves were half asleep,
The clouds were gone to play,
And on the bosom of the deep,
The smile of Heaven lay;
It seemed as if the hour were one
Sent from beyond the skies,
Which scattered from above the sun
A light of Paradise.

THE RECOLLECTION

We paused amid the pines that stood
The giants of the waste,
Tortured by storms to shapes as rude
As serpents interlaced,
And soothed by every azure breath,
That under heaven is blown,
To harmonies and hues beneath,
As tender as its own;
Now all the tree-tops lay asleep,
Like green waves on the sea,
As still as in the silent deep
The ocean woods may be.

How calm it was!—the silence there
By such a chain was bound
That even the busy woodpecker
Made stiller by her sound
The inviolable quietness;
The breath of peace we drew
With its soft motion made not less
The calm that round us grew.
There seemed from the remotest seat
Of the white mountain waste,
To the soft flower beneath our feet,
A magic circle traced,—
A spirit interfused around,
A thrilling silent life,
To momentary peace it bound
Our mortal nature's strife;—

THE RECOLLECTION

And still I felt the centre of
The magic circle there,
Was one fair form that filled with love
The lifeless atmosphere.

We paused beside the pools that lie
Under the forest bough,
Each seemed as 't were a little sky
Gulphed in a world below;
A firmament of purple light,
Which in the dark earth lay,
More boundless than the depth of night,
And purer than the day—
In which the lovely forests grew
As in the upper air,
More perfect both in shape and hue
Than any spreading there.
There lay the glade and neighbouring
lawn,
And through the dark green wood
The white sun twinkling like the dawn
Out of a speckled cloud.
Sweet views which in our world above
Can never well be seen,
Were imaged by the water's love
Of that fair forest green.
And all was interfused beneath
With an elysian glow,
An atmosphere without a breath,
A softer day below.

THE RECOLLECTION

Like one beloved the scene had lent
To the dark water's breast,
Its every leaf and lineament
With more than truth exprest;
Until an envious wind crept by,
Like an unwelcome thought,
Which from the mind's too faithful eye
Blots one dear image out.
Though thou art ever fair and kind,
The forests ever green,
Less oft is peace in Shelley's mind,
Than calm in waters seen.

With A Guitar.
To Jane

Ariel to Miranda.—Take
This slave of Music, for the sake
Of him who is the slave of thee,
And teach it all the harmony
In which thou canst, and only thou,
Make the delighted spirit glow,
Till joy denies itself again,
And, too intense, is turned to pain;
For by permission and command
Of thine own Prince Ferdinand,
Poor Ariel sends this silent token
Of more than ever can be spoken;
Your guardian spirit, Ariel, who,
From life to life, must still pursue
Your happiness;—for thus alone
Can Ariel ever find his own.
From Prospero's enchanted cell,
As the mighty verses tell,
To the throne of Naples, he
Lit you o'er the trackless sea,
Flitting on, your prow before,
Like a living meteor.

WITH A GUITAR

When you die, the silent Moon,
In her interlunar swoon,
Is not sadder in her cell
Than deserted Ariel.
When you live again on earth,
Like an unseen star of birth,
Ariel guides you o'er the sea
Of life from your nativity.
Many changes have been run,
Since Ferdinand and you begun
Your course of love, and Ariel still
Has tracked your steps, and served your
will;

Now, in humbler, happier lot,
This is all remembered not;
And now, alas! the poor sprite is
Imprisoned, for some fault of his,
In a body like a grave;—
From you he only dares to crave,
For his service and his sorrow,
A smile to-day, a song to-morrow.

The artist who this idol wrought,
To echo all harmonious thought,
Felled a tree, while on the steep
The woods were in their winter sleep,
Rocked in that repose divine
On the wind-swept Apennine;
And dreaming some of Autumn past,
And some of Spring approaching fast,

WITH A GUITAR

And some of April buds and showers,
And some of songs in July bowers,
And all of love; and so this tree,—
O that such our death may be!—
Died in sleep, and felt no pain,
To live in happier form again:
From which, beneath Heaven's fairest star,
The artist wrought this loved Guitar,
And taught it justly to reply,
To all who question skilfully,
In language gentle as thine own;
Whispering in enamoured tone
Sweet oracles of woods and dells,
And summer winds in sylvan cells;
For it had learnt all harmonies
Of the plains and of the skies,
Of the forests and the mountains,
And the many-voicèd fountains;
The clearest echoes of the hills,
The softest notes of falling rills,
The melodies of birds and bees,
The murmuring of summer seas,
And pattering rain, and breathing dew,
And airs of evening; and it knew
That seldom-heard mysterious sound,
Which, driven on its diurnal round,
As it floats through boundless day,
Our world enkindles on its way—
All this it knows, but will not tell
To those who cannot question well

WITH A GUITAR

The spirit that inhabits it;
It talks according to the wit
Of its companions; and no more
Is heard than has been felt before,
By those who tempt it to betray
These secrets of an elder day:
But sweetly as its answers will
Flatter hands of perfect skill,
It keeps its highest holiest tone
For our beloved Jane alone.

To Jane: "The
Keen Stars
were Twinkling"

The keen stars were twinkling,
And the fair moon was rising among them,
Dear Jane!

The guitar was tinkling,
But the notes were not sweet till you sung
them
Again.

As the moon's soft splendour
O'er the faint cold starlight of heaven
Is thrown,
So your voice most tender
To the strings without soul had then given
Its own.

The stars will awaken,
Though the moon sleep a full hour later,
To-night;
No leaf will be shaken
Whilst the dews of your melody scatter
Delight.

TO JANE

Though the sound overpowers,
Sing again, with your dear voice revealing
A tone

Of some world far from ours,
Where music and moonlight and feeling
Are one.

Lines Written in
the Bay of Lerici

She left me at the silent time
When the moon had ceased to climb
The azure path of Heaven's steep,
And like an albatross asleep,
Balanced on her wings of light,
Hovered in the purple night,
Ere she sought her ocean nest
In the chambers of the West.
She left me, and I stayed alone
Thinking over every tone
Which, though silent to the ear, *
The enchanted heart could hear,
Like notes which die when born, but still
Haunt the echoes of the hill;
And feeling ever—Oh, too much!—
The soft vibration of her touch,
As if her gentle hand, even now,
Lightly trembled on my brow;
And thus, although she absent were,
Memory gave me all of her
That even Fancy dares to claim:—
Her presence had made weak and tame
All passions, and I lived alone
In the time which is our own;

IN THE BAY OF LERICI

The past and future were forgot,
As they had been, and would be, not.
But soon, the guardian angel gone,
The dæmon reassumed his throne
In my faint heart. I dare not speak
My thoughts, but thus disturbed and weak:
I sat and saw the vessels glide
Over the ocean bright and wide,
Like spirit-wingèd chariots sent
O'er some serenest element
For ministrations strange and far;
As if to some Elysian star
Sailed for drink to medicine
Such sweet and bitter pain as mine.
And the winds that winged their flight
From the land came fresh and light,
And the scent of wingèd flowers,
And the coolness of the hours
Of dew, and sweet warmth left by day,
Were scattered o'er the twinkling bay.
And the fisher with his lamp
And spear about the low rocks damp
Crept, and struck the fish which came
To worship the delusive flame.
Too happy they, whose pleasure sought
Extinguishes all sense and thought
Of the regret that pleasure leaves,
Destroying life alone, not peace!

On a Poet's
Lips I Slept

On a poet's lips I slept
Dreaming like a love-adept
In the sound his breathing kept;
Nor seeks nor finds he mortal blisses,
But feeds on the aërial kisses,
Of shapes that haunt Thought's wilder-
nesses.

He will watch from dawn to gloom
The lake-reflected sun illumine
The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom,
Nor heed nor see what things they be—
But from these create he can
Forms more real than living man,
Nurslings of Immortality.

Fragment

I faint, I perish with my love! I grow
Frail as a cloud whose [splendours] pale
Under the evening's ever-changing glow:
I die like mist upon the gale,
And like a wave under the calm I fail.

To ———

When passion's trance is overpast,
If tenderness and truth could last
Or live, whilst all wild feelings keep
Some mortal slumber, dark and deep,
I should not weep, I should not weep!

It were enough to feel, to see,
Thy soft eyes gazing tenderly,
And dream the rest—and burn and be
The secret food of fires unseen,
Couldst thou but be as thou hast been.

After the slumber of the year
The woodland violets reappear,
All things revive in field or grove,
And sky and sea, but two, which move,
And form all others, life and love.

The Aziola

"Did you not hear the aziola cry?
Methinks she must be nigh,"
Said Mary as we sate
In dusk ere stars were lit or candles
brought;
And I, who thought
The aziola was some tedious woman,
Asked, "Who is aziola?" How elate
I felt to know that it was nothing human,
No mockery of myself to fear or hate;
And Mary saw my soul,
And laughed, and said, "Disquiet yourself
not;
'Tis nothing but a little downy owl."

Sad aziola! many an even-tide
Thy music I had heard
By wood and stream, meadow and moun-
tain-side,
And fields and marshes wide,
Such as nor voice, nor lute, nor wind, nor
bird,
The soul ever stirred;
Unlike and far sweeter than them all.
Sad aziola! from that moment I
Loved thee and thy sad cry.

Wild with
Weeping



My head is wild with weeping for a grief
Which is the shadow of a gentle mind.
I walk into the air (but no relief
To seek,—or haply if I sought, to find;
It came unsought); to wonder that a
chief
Among men's spirits could be cold and
blind.

Ginevra

Wild, pale, and wonder-stricken, even as
one

Who staggers forth into the air and sun
From the dark chambers of a mortal fever,
Bewildered, and incapable, and ever
Fancying strange comments in her dizzy
brain

Of usual shapes, till the familiar train
Of objects and of persons past like things
Strange as a dreamer's mad imaginings,
Ginevra from the nuptial altar went;
The vows to which her lips had sworn
assent

Rung in her brain still with a jarring din,
Deafening the lost intelligence within.

And so she moved under the bridal veil,
Which made the paleness of her cheek
more pale,

And deepened the faint crimson of her
mouth,

And darkened her dark locks as moon-
light doth,—

And of the gold and jewels glittering
there

She scarce felt conscious,—but the weary
glare

GINEVRA

Lay like a chaos of unwelcome light,
Vexing the sense with gorgeous undelight.
A moonbeam in the shadow of a cloud
Was less heavenly fair—her face was
 bowed,
And as she past, the diamonds in her
 hair
Were mirrored in the polished marble
 stair
Which led from the cathedral to the
 street,
And ever as she went her light fair feet
Erased these images.

The bridemaids who round her throng-
 ing came,
Some, with a sense of self-rebuke and
 shame,
Envyng the unenviable; and others
Making the joy that should have been
 another's,
Their own by gentle sympathy; and some
Sighing to think of an unhappy home:
Some few admiring what can ever lure
Maidens to leave the heaven serene and
 pure
Of parents' smiles for life's great cheat;
 a thing
Bitter to taste, sweet in imagining.

GINEVRA

But they are all dispersed—and lo! she
stands

Looking in idle grief on her white hands,
Alone within the garden now her own;
And through the sunny air, with jangling
tone,

The music of the merry marriage bells,
Killing the azure silence, sinks and
swells;—

Absorbed like one within a dream who
dreams

That he is dreaming, until slumber seems
A mockery of itself—when suddenly
Antonio stood before her, pale as she.

With agony, with sorrow, and with pride,
He lifted his wan eyes upon the bride,
And said, "Is this thy faith?" And then
as one

Whose sleeping face is stricken by the
sun

With light like a harsh voice, which bids
him rise

And look upon his day of life with eyes
Which weep in vain that they can dream
no more,

Ginevra saw her lover, and forbore
To shriek or faint, and checked the stifling
blood

Rushing upon her heart, and unsubdued
Said, "Friend, if earthly violence or ill,

GINEVRA

Suspicion, doubt, or the tyrannic will
Of parents, chance, or custom, time or
change,

Or circumstance, or terror, or revenge,
Or wildered looks, or words, or evil speech,
With all their stings and venom can im-
peach

Our love,—we love not: if the grave
which hides

The victim from the tyrant, and divides
The cheek that whitens from the eyes
that dart

Imperious inquisition to the heart
That is another's, could dissever ours,
We love not." "What! do not the silent
hours

Beckon thee to Gherardi's bridal bed?
Is not that ring"—a pledge, he would
have said,

Of broken vows, but she with patient
look

The golden circle from her finger took,
And said, "Accept this token of my faith,
The pledge of vows to be absolved by
death;

And I am dead, or shall be soon—my
knell

Will mix its music with that merry bell.
Does it not sound as if they sweetly said
'We toll a corpse out of the marriage-bed'?

GINEVRA

The flowers upon my bridal chamber
 strewn
Will serve unfaded for my bier—so soon
That even the dying violet will not die
Before Ginevra." The strong fantasy
Had made her accents weaker and more
 weak,
And quenched the crimson life upon her
 cheek,
And glazed her eyes, and spread an
 atmosphere
Round her, which chilled the burning
 noon with fear,
Making her but an image of the thought
Which, like a prophet or a shadow,
 brought
News of the terrors of the coming time.
Like an accuser branded with the crime
He would have cast on a beloved friend
Whose dying eyes reproach not to the end
The pale betrayer—he then with vain
 repentance
Would share—he cannot now avert—the
 sentence,—
Antonio stood and would have spoken,
 when
The compound voice of women and of
 men
Was heard approaching; he retired, while
 she

GINEVRA

Was led amid the admiring company
Back to the palace,—and her maidens
soon

Changed her attire for the afternoon,
And left her at her own request to keep
An hour of quiet and rest: like one asleep
With open eyes and folded hands she lay,
Pale in the light of the declining day

Meanwhile the day sinks fast, the sun
is set,

And in the lighted hall the guests are
met;

The beautiful looked lovelier in the light
Of love, and admiration, and delight,
Reflected from a thousand hearts and
eyes

Kindling a momentary paradise.

This crowd is safer than the silent wood,
Where love's own doubts disturb the
solitude;

On frozen hearts the fiery rain of wine
Falls, and the dew of music more divine
Tempers the deep emotions of the time
To spirits cradled in a sunny clime:—
How many meet, who never yet have met,
To part too soon, but never to forget.
How many saw the beauty, power, and
wit

GINEVRA

Of looks and words which ne'er enchanted
yet;
But life's familiar veil was now withdrawn,
As the world leaps before an earthquake's
dawn,
And unprophetic of the coming hours,
The matin winds from the expanded
flowers
Scatter their hoarded incense, and awaken
The earth, until the dewy sleep is shaken
From every living heart which it possesses,
Through seas and winds, cities and wil-
dernesses,
As if the future and the past were all
Treasured i' the instant;—so Gherardi's
hall
Laughed in the mirth of its lord's fes-
tival,
Till someone asked, "Where is the Bride?"
And then
A bridesmaid went,—and ere she came
again
A silence fell upon the guests—a pause
Of expectation, as when beauty awes
All hearts with its approach, though un-
beheld;
Then wonder, and then fear that wonder
quelled;—
For whispers past from mouth to ear
which drew

GINEVRA

The colour from the hearer's cheeks, and
flew

Louder and louder from the company;
And then Gherardi entered with an eye
Of ostentatious trouble, and a crowd
Surrounded him, and some were weeping
loud.

They found Ginevra dead! if it be death
To lie without motion, or pulse, or breath,
With waxen cheeks, and limbs cold, stiff,
and white,

And open eyes whose fixed and glassy
light

Mocked at the speculation they had
owned;

If it be death, when there is felt around
A smell of clay, a pale and icy glare,
And silence, and a sense that lifts the
hair

From the scalp to the ancles, as it were
Corruption from the spirit passing forth,
And giving all it shrouded to the earth,
And leaving as swift lightning in its
flight

Ashes and smoke and darkness: in our
night

Of thought we know thus much of death,
—no more

Than the unborn dream of our life, before

GINEVRA

Their barks are wrecked on its inhospitable
shore.

The marriage feast and its solemnity
Was turned to funeral pomp—the com-
pany,

With heavy hearts and looks, broke up;
nor they

Who loved the dead went weeping on
their way

Alone, but sorrow mixed with sad surprise
Loosened the springs of pity in all eyes,
On which that form, whose fate they weep
in vain,

Will never, thought they, kindle smiles
again.

The lamps which half extinguished in
their haste

Gleamed far and faint o'er the abandoned
feast,

Showed as it were within the vaulted room
A cloud of sorrow hanging, as if gloom
Had past out of men's minds into the air.
Some few yet stood around Gherardi there,
Friends and relations of the dead,—and he,
A loveless man, accepted torpidly

The consolation that he wanted not;
Awe in the place of grief within him
wrought.

Their whispers made the solemn silence
seem

GINEVRA

More still—some wept, . . .
Some melted into tears without a sob,
And some with hearts that might be
 heard to throb
Leant on the table, and at intervals
Shuddered to hear through the deserted
 halls
And corridors the thrilling shrieks which
 came
Upon the breeze of night that shook the
 flame
Of every torch and taper as it swept
From out the chamber where the women
 kept;
Their tears fell on the dear companion
 cold
Of pleasures now departed; then was
 knolled
The bell of death. . . .

THE DIRGE

Old winter was gone
In his weakness back to the mountains
 hoar,
And the spring came down
From the planet that hovers upon the
 shore
Where the sea of sunlight encroaches
On the limits of wintry night;—

GINEVRA

If the land, and the air, and the sea
Rejoice not when spring approaches,
We did not rejoice in thee,
Ginevra!

She is still, she is cold
On the bridal couch,
One step to the white death-bed,
And one to the bier,
And one to the charnel—and one, O
where?
The dark arrow fled
In the noon.

Ere the sun through heaven once more
has rolled
The rats in her heart
Will have made their nest,
And the worms be alive in her golden
hair;
While the spirit that guides the sun
Sits throned in his flaming chair,
She shall sleep.

The Magnetic Lady
to her Patient

"Sleep, sleep on! forget thy pain;
My hand is on thy brow,
My spirit on thy brain;
My pity on thy heart, poor friend;
And from my fingers flow
The powers of life, and like a sign,
Seal thee from thine hour of woe;
And brood on thee, but may not blend
With thine.

"Sleep, sleep on. I love thee not;
But when I think that he
Who made and makes my lot
As full of flowers as thine of weeds
Might have been lost like thee;
And that a hand which was not mine
Might then have charmed his agony
As I another's—my heart bleeds
For thine.

"Sleep, sleep, and with the slumber of
The dead and the unborn
Forget thy life and love;
Forget that thou must wake for ever;
Forget the world's dull scorn;

THE MAGNETIC LADY

Forget lost health and the divine
Feelings which died in youth's brief
morn;
And forget me, for I can never
Be thine.

"Like a cloud big with a May shower,
My soul weeps healing rain
On thee, thou withered flower;
It breathes mute music on thy sleep;
Its odour calms thy brain;
Its light within thy gloomy breast
Spreads like a second youth again.
By mine thy being is to its deep
Possess.

"The spell is done. How feel you now?"
"Better—Quite well," replied
The sleeper. "What would do
You good when suffering and awake?
What cure your head and side?—" *
"What would cure, that would kill me,
Jane:
And as I must on earth abide
Awhile, yet tempt me not to break
My chain."

The Apennine

Listen, listen, Mary mine,
To the whisper of the Apennine;
It bursts on the roof like the thunder's
 roar

Or like the sea on a Northern shore,
Heard in its raging ebb and flow
By the captives pent in the cave below.
The Apennine in the light of day
Is a mighty mountain dim and gray,
Which between the earth and the sky
 doth lay¹;

But when night comes, a chaos dread
On the dim starlight then is spread,
And the Apennine walks abroad with the
 storm.

¹ Byron was not alone in committing this strange blunder
in grammar.

Hymn of Apollo

The sleepless hours who watch me as I
lie,

Curtained with star-inwoven tapestries,
From the broad moonlight of the sky,
Fanning the busy dreams from my dim
eyes,—

Waken me when their Mother, the gray
Dawn,
Tells them that dreams and that the
moon is gone.

Then I arise, and climbing heaven's blue
dome,

I walk over the mountains and the
waves,

Leaving my robe upon the ocean's foam;
My footsteps pave the clouds with fire;
the caves

Are filled with my bright presence, and
the air

Leaves the green earth to my embraces
bare.

HYMN OF APOLLO

The sunbeams are my shafts, with which I
kill

Deceit, that loves the night and fears
the day;

All men who do or even imagine ill

Fly me, and from the glory of my ray
Good minds and open actions take new
might,

Until diminished by the reign of night.

I feed the clouds, the rainbows, and the
flowers

With their etherial colours; the Moon's
globe

And the pure stars in their eternal bowers
Are cinctured with my power as with a
robe;

Whatever lamps on Earth or Heaven may
shine,

Are portions of one power, which is mine.

I stand at noon upon the peak of Heaven,

Then with unwilling steps I wander down
Into the clouds of the Atlantic even;

For grief that I depart they weep and
frown:

What look is more delightful than the
smile

With which I soothe them from the western
isle?

HYMN OF APOLLO

I am the eye with which the universe
Beholds itself and knows itself divine;
All harmony of instrument or verse,
All prophecy, all medicine are mine,
All light of art or nature; to my song
Victory and praise in their own right
belong.

Hymn of Pan

From the forests and highlands
We come, we come;
From the river-girt islands,
Where loud waves are dumb
Listening to my sweet pipings.
The wind in the reeds and the rushes,
The bees on the bells of thyme,
The birds on the myrtle bushes,
The cicale above in the lime,
And the lizards below in the grass,
Were as silent as ever old Tmolus was,
Listening to my sweet pipings.

Liquid Peneus was flowing,
And all dark Tempe lay
In Pelion's shadow, outgrowing
The light of the dying day
Speeded by my sweet pipings.
The Sileni, and Sylvans, and Fauns,
And the Nymphs of the woods and
waves,
To the edge of the moist river-lawns,
And the brink of the dewy caves,

HYMN OF PAN

And all that did then attend and follow,
Were silent with love, as you now, Apollo,
With envy of my sweet pipings.

I sang of the dancing stars,
I sang of the dædal Earth,
And of Heaven—and the giant wars,
And Love, and Death, and Birth,—
And then I changed my pipings,—
Singing how down the vale of Menalus
I pursued a maiden and clasped a
reed:

Gods and men, we are all deluded thus!
It breaks in our bosom and then
we bleed:

All wept, as I think both ye now would,
If envy or age had not frozen your blood,
At the sorrow of my sweet pipings.

To-morrow

Where art thou, beloved To-morrow?
When, young and old and strong and
weak,
Rich and poor, through joy and sorrow,
Thy sweet smiles we ever seek,—
In thy place—ah! well-a-day!
We find the thing we fled—To-day.

If I walk in Autumn's even
While the dead leaves pass,
If I look on Spring's soft Heaven,—
Something is not there which was.
Winter's wondrous frost and snow,
Summer's clouds, where are they now?